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CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS 57

EDITORIALS:

PUBLIC WORK AND RELIEF by Freda Kirchwey 59
THAT ANGLO-RUSSIAN PACT 60
FUNDS FOR LA FOLLETTE 61

THE BASTILLE TRADITION by Crane Brinton 62

WARN JAPAN NOW! by Nathaniel Peffer 64

THIS IS AMERICA. IV. THE GARNER COUNTRY by Charles Curtis Munz 66

WENDELL WILLKIE IS WUINED by McAlister Coleman 69

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS. PROSPEROUS SWEDEN by Keith Hutchison 70

IN THE WIND 71

ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard 72

BOOKS AND THE ARTS:

NOTES BY THE WAY by Margaret Marshall 73
THOMAS WOLFE, AUTOBIOGRAPHER by Louis Kronenberger 75
DOROTHY PARKER'S IDLE RICH by Mina Curtiss 76
THE COMMON MAN IN BRITAIN by Keith Hutchison 78
CALIFORNIA GROTESQUE by Louis B. Salomon 78
EX-CONVICT TRIUMPHS by Norah Hoult 79
SHORTER NOTICES 80
DANCE NOTE by Virginia Mishnun 80
RECORDS by B. H. Haggin 81
FILMS by Franz Hoellering 82

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The Shape of Things

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IN A BELATED VOTE THE SENATE REVERSED itself by restoring the President's power over the dollar and reestablishing the purchase of foreign silver. The Administration victory was won by a narrow margin of four votes when six of the eleven silver Senators were induced to switch their votes in return for an advance in the buying price of domestic silver to 71.1 cents an ounce. Measured in terms of dollars the price was a small one for a major political victory. The added cost to the Treasury of the seven extra cents per ounce for domestic silver will be largely offset by a reduction in the price paid for foreign silver. And in no case would it amount to more than a few million dollars. But it must be admitted that both conservatives and liberals came out of the struggle with badly tarnished prestige. The "economy bloc" belied its principles when it voted, originally, for an outrageous subsidy of 77.6 cents an ounce on domestic silver. And the Administration forces resorted to exactly the same tactics when they bought support for Presidential control over the dollar by concessions to the silverites. The irony of the situation is heightened by the fact that of the three bitter Congressional battles fought over the Fourth of July week-end, the Administration made its chief stand on the least important—that of monetary powers unlikely to be used—and lost the far more vital struggles over relief and neutrality.

*

WITH THIRTY-FOUR SENATORS LINED UP IN opposition to the Administration's neutrality program, the prospects for revision of the Neutrality Act remain as obscure as the day Congress opened. While the Administration is undoubtedly strong enough to pass the Bloom bill if it ever reaches a vote in the Senate, it is evident that this cannot be achieved without one of the bitterest fights in Congressional history. The fight would be well worth while if there were any assurance that the bill could be passed with the Vorys arms-embargo rider stricken out. But nothing could be more disastrous than a legislative jam which resulted in maintaining the present act during the critical months which lie just ahead.

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Failure to remove the existing ban on the export of munitions and implements of war to belligerents would be an open invitation to Hitler to strike while Germany retains the tremendous advantage gained by seizure of the Austrian and Czech war supplies. In view of the difficulties in obtaining the Senate's agreement to any one plan, both the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune* have suggested outright repeal of the act as an alternative to a long and bitter struggle over revision. Such a move might win the support of veteran isolationists like Borah and Johnson, who have never liked the present law. It should appeal to the Republicans, since it restores that pre-Roosevelt status. And it would definitely put an end to an intolerable situation in which the weight of American foreign policy, under the guise of "neutrality," has been thrown on the side of aggression.

*

IF THE ADMINISTRATION'S GOOD-NEIGHBOR policy means anything, it means making an effort to save Latin America from the sticky web of barter trade with the totalitarian powers. That in turn means credits, and an admirable agency for extending them is ready to hand in the form of the Export-Import Bank. But that would be far too simple and lacking in that perverseness which in Washington operates to turn any anti-fascist gun away from its mark and if possible level it at the gunner. Thus the Export-Import Bank is engrossed at present not in plans to stimulate trade with South America but in arranging to get $15,000,000 worth of cotton to General Franco on the basis of two years' credit! As Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen were quick to point out, the State Department demanded cash for such non-military items as this country was allowed to send to the late Spanish Republic on the ground that its credit rating wasn't good. Now it is willing to extend heavy credits to Franco, although a war in the next two years would make the General's wobbling government a risk too great for a loan-shark. What makes the eagerness of the loan advocates even more sinister is the coincidence that the Franco government is suing the United States Treasury for exactly $15,000,000 for purchasing silver from the republic, which in Franco's eyes had no title to the metal although it was the legal government of Spain. Is the cotton loan Franco's way of "settling" a case that would otherwise be thrown out of court? In any event the transaction has a bad odor and it is time the President smoked out the striped-pants saboteurs in his State Department.

*

THE C. I. O. HAS WON ANOTHER VICTORY over Frank Hague and his four yes-men of the Jersey City Commission. The ordinance, before its revision, sought—in spite of the Supreme Court's ruling—to allow as little free speech as possible. Revised under pressure from the C. I. O., the new ordinance omits earlier provisions which would have limited meetings to four street corners, prohibited meetings at factory gates, required four days' notice to the Director of Safety before any meeting, and limited the period of public meetings in political campaigns to four weeks prior to elections or referendums. Permits for meetings are still required under the new ordinance, but Hague explained that this was "a mere formality." Twenty-four hours' notice is required "to see that meetings were not duplicated." Only the original four "free-speech" sites need four days' notice for their use, and Hague explained that no permits would be required for meetings at factory gates. "We turn the streets over to the people," Hague said piously. We welcome the new convert to civil liberties, though we shan't trust him any farther than we can throw a cat.

*

BRITAIN'S DECISION TO EXTEND CREDITS totaling $300,000,000 to its potential allies for the purchase of munitions and other war materials is a canny move. More potent than threats of force is the threat of economic resistance to fascist plans of conquest. For while relative military strength is debatable, in the field of finance England and France are unbeatable, and Hitler knows it. The angry reception of Britain's move by the German press is evidence that it is taken seriously. At last the great Western power is doing what it should have done in Spain and Czechoslovakia and, to a greater extent than it has, in China. The sum announced is not enough but it is substantial. It should provide enough up-to-date equipment to strengthen appreciably the defensive powers of Poland, Rumania, Turkey, and Greece. This aid is particularly useful in the case of Poland and Rumania, since both countries would probably be cut off from British supplies in the event of war. But the most important result of the British decision is its moral effect. The Nazi press rightly views it as an act of treason, and so it is—treason to the spirit of Munich—for British credits are more convincing evidence of future intentions than British promises.

*

JAPANESE EXTREMISTS ADDED FRANCE LAST week to the large and growing list of countries with which Tokyo has become seriously embroiled. Except for further destructive air raids on Chungking and other Chinese cities, military operations against China have been all but forgotten as the military clique continues to hit out in other directions. The blockade of the British concessions at Tientsin and Amoy is now in its fourth week with little prospect of early solution. Fighting between the Japanese and Outer Mongolian-Soviet forces has increased in intensity until it threatens to constitute a serious strain on the dwindling Japanese resources. As

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if this were not trouble enough, the army clique has issued a virtual ultimatum to the authorities of the French concession at Hankow demanding an apology for the ban of a Japanese "victory" parade through the concession and the arrest of certain Chinese leaders. Meanwhile, the long-delayed Japanese-British parley on the Tientsin affair is scheduled to open about July 13 with the Japanese making broad demands for British economic assistance to the puppet governments in China. Sir John Simon has already indicated that Great Britain will reject Japan's basic demand—that Britain support the fiat currency which the Japanese have foisted on the population of the occupied areas. Dispatches from Tokyo indicate that the outcome of the Sino-Japanese conflict may hinge on the results of the Tokyo conference. That being the case, the military clique may be expected to play its hand to the limit during the next few weeks.

Public Work and Relief

By FREDA KIRCHWEY

THE spreading strike of construction workers on WPA projects against the cut in their hourly wage is the logical culmination of an unrealistic relief policy. The decision by Congress to bring down the rate precipitated the conflict, but the seeds of trouble had been planted long ago.

When the WPA was instituted, unemployment was still looked upon as a temporary ill, the by-product of depression, and relief as an emergency job. No one believes that now; not even, we suspect, those business men and politicians who for public consumption argue that only the threat of New Deal reform prevents private industry from soaking up all the unemployed. Even if business activity should rise to the 1929 level it would not absorb more than one-fourth of the men and women now unemployed or at work on government projects. But Congress as a whole has never faced this reality; and supporters of the New Deal have been among the last to acknowledge it. To meet the issue squarely would involve political dangers they are only too glad to be able to avoid. But their refusal to face the facts of 1939 and the future has had many ugly results. It has led to a deceptive system of national bookkeeping, a relief policy calculated to perpetuate a sense of social insecurity rather than to overcome it, and such anomalies as produced the new security-wage provisions against which the WPA workers are now protesting.

Why should skilled workers on WPA construction projects be paid less than their fellows employed on other government jobs or by private contractors? Why should their right to strike be even questioned? Such discrimination is commonly justified by the argument that they are not "regular" government employees but are "the unemployed"—jobless dependents who are permitted to work for their subsistence during an emergency. Government enterprises organized under the WPA have been classified as "made work," designed to absorb labor rather than for their intrinsic value. How meaningless this classification has become is evident as one runs through the list of jobs included in the WPA program. Every piece of public construction that could possibly be shunted over to the WPA by local authorities has landed there: the construction and repair of public and many private buildings, the laying out of great highway systems and parks and playgrounds. The list could be stretched indefinitely. Though I have seen no figures to prove it, I am willing to bet that the majority of such projects would have been or should have been undertaken in the normal course of events. They are public enterprises that any local or national authority would launch if it could lay hands on sufficient funds. Many are nothing more than the necessary functions of upkeep and repair, as is evidenced by the WPA fences one sees planted about almost every patch of new paving or road excavation. If they were not financed with federal money they would have to be included in local budgets—and the workers would have to be paid prevailing rates of wages.

In other words, on a wide variety of construction operations, workers have been employed in direct competition, not only with privately paid labor on similar jobs, but with labor that would have to be employed on the same job if WPA had never existed and paid at regular going rates. When this fact is thoroughly digested, it becomes hard even to swallow two sententious opinions expressed editorially in the New York *Herald Tribune;* first, that Colonel Somervell echoed the "overwhelming sentiment of the American public" when he remarked, "If they'd all quit we'd be tickled to death," and second, that the prevailing-wage system was "an unconscionable imposition on the taxpayers of the nation."

On the other hand, the *Herald Tribune* is right when it goes on to argue that the prevailing-wage system was "outrageously discriminatory." It was. The semi-skilled and unskilled workers have been largely unorganized and therefore relatively helpless. Through the Workers' Alliance they have mustered barely enough strength to protest effectively against wholesale lay-offs and the more glaring forms of insecurity on the job. This "outrageous discrimination," however, was a direct bonus to the "taxpayers of the nation," who thus got their sewers laid and their roads built at a labor cost far less than would have been possible under the conditions prevailing in ordinary public-construction jobs.

The present strike may be doomed to failure or Congress may see fit to restore the prevailing-wage provision in the new relief law. But in neither case will the basic difficulty be eliminated. Relief and public works have

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become dangerously entangled. They need to be separated, honestly and logically, dealt with in their own terms, and treated as parts of a permanent program designed to bring system and security into our economic structure.

This is a large order but it must be filled if our economic life is to go ahead without major breakdowns on the road. In January, 1937, *The Nation* printed an editorial outlining a permanent program for relief. "The emergency period for relief has passed," said *The Nation.* "The situation confronting the President today contrasts sharply with that of March 4, 1933. Then it was a matter of somehow getting food to the hungry, and of devising means of safeguarding self-respect in the process. . . . Today, at the threshold of the President's second term, the time has arrived for the shaping of a permanent policy." The editorial advocated that work projects should be undertaken on the basis of their social and economic value and should provide full-time work at standard wages and under standard conditions; while the system of social insurance should be extended as rapidly as possible to offer benefits to persons not otherwise cared for. Meanwhile, it urged, direct and adequate relief should be provided for all the needy, to be administered jointly by the federal and state governments. And simultaneously a nation-wide public employment service should be instituted, based on a complete census of the unemployed and buttressed with vocational training and rehabilitation.

That program sounds to me as sensible as it did in 1937—and as far from realization. Such a program can be substituted for the present disgraceful mess only if Congress and the Administration—and labor as well—are willing to deal with unemployment as a deep-rooted symptom of a chronic economic disease. They must forget that word "emergency"; it has lost its meaning and become nothing more than a deceptive political slogan.

That Anglo-Russian Pact

AS THE Anglo-Russian conversations drag on and a waiting world is kept in uneasy suspense by unusually laconic governments, rumors run wild. The reasons advanced for the long duration of the negotiations range from one extreme to the other. Chamberlain, the hero of Munich, and his inner cabinet are suspected of not really wanting the pact for which they seem to be bargaining so stubbornly, of playing a shrewd game both of appeasing their growing "stop-Hitler" opposition and preparing at the same time the grounds for a new Munich by showing up the Russians as unreliable —simultaneously using the negotiations to intimidate Hitler. On the other hand Stalin, the promoter of collective security, is suspected of not wanting the pact either and of secret dealings with Hitler. The confusion is intensified by the propaganda of the Axis, which has an enormous interest in creating mistrust in Russia's intentions. The peace moves of the Pope and the overtures which the Italian press is allowed to make to Russia serve the same purpose.

The Anglo-Russian negotiations started when England realized after the occupation of Czechoslovakia that whatever else it may be, Nazism is the streamlined rebirth of German imperialism and that Hitler had not fallen for Chamberlain's primitive scheme, according to which Hitler was to fight the Russians, exhaust himself even in victory, and in the end find himself at the mercy of the ruling classes of the rearmed democracies. Instead the possibility of a united attack on the West by Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan, and their satrapies became suddenly a reality. Against this danger England started to organize the "peace" front whose purpose was to protect not small nations—which England would sell down the river if it were to its real or imagined profit—but the British Empire. The Soviet Union entered the negotiations in a mood no less realistic. A pact with England and her allies would relieve Russia in all probability from the long-feared double attack in the West and the East; at least Russia could be sure that it would not have to face Japan and Germany alone while the democracies looked on. And if things should turn out otherwise, nothing would be lost.

If these were the motives for the opening of the negotiations then their long duration can mean only one thing: that the two parties are not yet sure that they will get what they want out of the bargain. The subtle questions which have arisen—i. e., if Hitler engineers internal coups in Danzig or in the Baltic states, will international law allow England to act?—are merely the forms in which the mutual distrust is discussed. (In his latest speech Chamberlain envisioned internal changes in Danzig which he would consider inimical and of more than local importance. Tomorrow he may apply this view generally to all the danger zones.) Stalin wants to go to war after England; Chamberlain may want to be sure that Stalin has not learned a lesson from himself—i e., that he will not try to get the democracies into a fight with Hitler, while he stands by until they exhaust themselves. This variation seems remote—it would not be logical for Stalin to miss the occasion to help destroy his western arch-enemy, but Chamberlain may still entertain such fears. On the other hand, Chamberlain's declaration on Danzig, which was precise enough to satisfy his bitterest critics in Commons, may serve to take the edge off Soviet suspicions and speed up negotiations.

Are there any guaranties of faithfulness in a romantic marriage contract, not to speak of a marriage for prosaic purposes between two parties who waste no love on each other? To put the question this way is to oversimplify it.

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People who fear and dislike each other may unite against the plague or they may use, as they often do, a common mail service. And the stop-Hitler campaign is looked on by the democracies as merely an action against a plague. Therein lie both the weakness of an anti-Hitler front which is ideologically split and the second profound reason for the prolonged negotiations. In the meantime they fulfill one important function: they keep Hitler guessing. No doubt he feels, for the first time, as uncomfortable as the rest of the world.

Funds for La Follette

THE NATION appeals to progressives throughout the country, in editorial offices and in Congress, to muster every bit of influence at their command in a fight to save the La Follette investigation. Reaction could win no greater victory at this session than to choke off the inquiry. The Dies committee had no difficulty in obtaining another $100,000 from a Democratic-controlled Congress, though it has done its best to wreck the New Deal under the guise of fighting subversive influences. The La Follette civil-liberties committee is still waiting for a new appropriation, though it ran out of funds weeks ago.

The apathy of progressives toward the committee's fate is inexcusable. Democracy has found no more effective or appropriate weapon against reaction. The inquiry has served to call attention, not to random fascist racketeers or crackpots, but to major forces that threaten freedom in this country. The committee's activities involve no compromise with our basic ideals, no coercion or suppression, no addition of "ifs" and "buts" to the Bill of Rights. Publicity has been the committee's principal weapon. The inquiry is a thoroughly democratic way to deal with undemocratic influences, and only those who cannot stand the spotlight should object to its continuance.

Behind the fight to kill the La Follette inquiry are organizations and men who fear the factual dynamite in its files. One of these organizations is the Associated Farmers of California and of the Pacific Coast. The Associated Farmers, the most successful attempt this country has yet seen to use the farmer as a front for reactionary big business, claims that it has nothing to hide and complains that it has not yet been given a hearing by the committee. But one may be sure that its lobbyists at the capital are doing all they can to keep the committee from getting a new appropriation. The Associated Farmers contains the seeds—and in some sections of the Pacific Coast far more than the seeds—of a native American fascism. Its hold depends in large part on keeping its rank and file in the dark as to its real backers and aims.

The enemies of the La Follette committee have shrewdly avoided a frontal attack, for that would have awakened New Deal forces to the need for putting up a fight in behalf of the investigation. The publicity men and lobbyists working against continuance of the inquiry have sought instead to spread the impression that it was no longer needed. Dies has put a few fascist addlepates on the stand, and this "exposé" has been used to sell the idea that a supposedly reformed Dies committee can be trusted to do the work of the La Follette committee. The Attorney General has entered the picture, sent his own investigators to the Coast, and told Administration leaders that his new civil-liberties bureau makes the La Follette inquiry unnecessary. We have a high regard for the Attorney General, but we think he has been badly misinformed. There is room for both the Department of Justice and the La Follette inquiry on the Coast, but the former alone cannot possibly do the job. The most effective blow against the Associated Farmers would be disclosure of its sources of revenue. We suspect that much of its following would be shocked to learn where a big portion of its financing has come from, but here publicity, not prosecution, is the weapon. Even in the field of vigilantism, action by the Department of Justice is difficult, for the organization counters vigilante charges by pointing to the deputy-sheriff badges on the strong-arm squads that have broken up picket lines and smashed strikes in California. Finally, how much confidence can the public feel in an inquiry by the Department of Justice so long as J. Edgar Hoover is head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation? Hoover is a pet of the Hearst press. Another of Hearst's favorites is Philip Bancroft of the Associated Farmers, his unsuccessful candidate for the United States Senate.

The Associated Farmers and Hearst took it on the chin in California last November when Olson was elected and the anti-labor initiative No. 1 was defeated. But these interests have been extraordinarily successful in hamstringing the Olson administration at Sacramento, and exposure of the organization is essential to strengthen the New Deal forces in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States for 1940. Both Olson and the lower house of the California Legislature have petitioned Congress to give the La Follette inquiry the funds it needs so that it may hold hearings in California. An unfortunate element in the situation is the hesitation exhibited by Senator La Follette. A combination of politics and punctilio has led him to pull his punches in the fight for his own inquiry. His political advisers in Wisconsin fear that the powerful enemies the investigation has made will spare no expense to defeat him for reelection. Senator La Follette had to fight hard for his last appropriation, and said at the time that he would not ask for another. He feels that honor requires him to abide by the promise. That makes the obligation to fight all the more binding on other progressives. The La Follette inquiry must go on.

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The Bastille Tradition

BY CRANE BRINTON

THE fall of the Bastille was a marked day from the start. Even in Tsarist Moscow enlightened gentlemen put candles in their windows when the news came. The very first anniversary, July 14, 1790, was celebrated at Paris with impressive ceremonies at the Champ de Mars. It rained, perhaps in retrospect a not unhappy symbol; for the democratic faith in which July 14 is one of the holy days has had to prove itself no fair-weather faith. Now, on the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the taking of the old feudal castle by the people of Paris, it still looks very much like rain. But, here and there all over the world, men will still celebrate the fall of the Bastille.

What are they celebrating? In France and the French dominions, they are in part celebrating a French national holiday. As an element in the *culte de la patrie,* July 14 is now so firmly established that it might well survive changes which, in pure logic, are quite antithetical to what the men of 1789 were striving for. Even a fascist France would probably have to make room for July 14, as the anti-clerical Third Republic has had to make room for Saint Joan of Arc. But Bastille Day, even more than the Fourth of July, is not just a national holiday. To the rest of the world, and to most Frenchmen, it is a memorial to the "principles of 1776 and 1789," to ideas common to Western democracy.

These ideas are to be found in eighteenth-century political writers of almost every nationality, in the American Declaration of Independence and Bills of Rights, and in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen which followed hard on Bastille Day. About their meaning and application historians and political theorists have debated endlessly. Was the French Declaration, for instance, intended to protect the individual citizen against the tyranny of the government, or, on the contrary, was it meant to clear away the complicated web of surviving medieval restraints and associations in order to make the Leviathan state supreme over the helpless individual citizen? Is Rousseau's "Social Contract" at bottom an individualistic or a collectivistic document? So complicated are political processes that the answers men give to these and similar questions are confusingly at variance. Four years after 1789 Robespierre, who certainly thought of himself as a good child of the Revolution, could justify the Reign of Terror as "the despotism of liberty against tyranny." Nevertheless, if we go behind words to the sentiments, habits, and ways of life which words crudely bring together and focus, we find that after one hundred and fifty years Bastille Day still has concrete meaning for us.

In the first place, the storming of the Bastille was an act of defiance against vested authority, a dramatic and concrete assertion that men can and will overthrow a government with which they are dissatisfied. It is true historically that the governments brought in by such revolutionary acts have not been slow to claim for themselves all sorts of imprescriptible authority. Jefferson's generous willingness to contemplate the necessity for a revolution every twenty years or so has not usually been characteristic of successful revolutionists. It is also true that this revolutionary heritage has helped to breed a blind and foolish hatred of all governmental action, a hatred which skillful conservatives have often put to the paradoxical use of preventing political and economic change. Yet both for good and for bad, this vague feeling that there is nothing particularly sacred or final in anything a government does is one of the realities often disguised as "individualism." It is not, even in France and in the United States, a feeling so strong and universal as to come anywhere near what the political theorist calls anarchism. The crisis over President Roosevelt's Supreme Court plan taught us that even in the land where good citizens leave their cars under "No Parking" signs and picnic where "No Trespassing" is allowed, some governmental arrangements are *almost* sacred and final.

In the second place—and this is most important—the revolutionary tradition is tied up with an attitude which, for purposes of analysis, we shall have to call metaphysical. Like most such attitudes, it is not with most men consciously and elaborately worked out in words, as the professional philosopher likes to work it out. But to deny that ordinary men cherish metaphysical sentiments, and possess at least a set of stereotyped ideas to express such sentiments, is to be guilty of a very grave intellectualist fallacy. Briefly, the reason why no governmental arrangement is final in the democratic faith is that in this faith nothing is final, nothing absolute. Governments are made by human beings who cannot possibly be right all of the time.

It is clear that this operational conception of truth is at variance with some very fundamental human dispositions. No orthodox Christian theologian, for instance, can entirely accept it. It is, however, the basic assumption of what we call natural science, and, if only through the

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triumphs of applied science, it has played a great and obvious part in the modern world. In its naked form of scientific skepticism, it seems clearly too much for ordinary men to bear, since in our daily lives habit and conditioning must put on something of the absolute. But in such modified forms as the nineteenth-century doctrines of evolution and progress, it has penetrated down into cultural levels for which the intellectual is likely to have a good deal of contempt. Try and tell most Americans that the idea of progress is meaningless! Not even the perfected totalitarian state has dared jettison the concept of progress.

Politically, these notions of government as a set of arrangements necessarily subject to change lead to the third general underlying characteristic of the democratic tradition: that government will change most readily which is conducted on the principle of the freest possible discussion. Since decisions must somehow be made, discussion will be followed by voting, and the wishes of the majority will prevail. But not forever. Renewed discussion will bring new problems and new majorities. From this there follows the apparatus of democratic government with which we are all familiar—universal suffrage, universal education, freedom of speech and of association, guaranties to minorities and to the individual, and, in practice, a party system of "ins" and "outs."

Such we take to be, in very simple form, the basic tradition of 1776 and 1789: a government by discussion in which all may take part, a belief in the necessity of change, a willingness in the final pinch to appeal to armed revolution to obtain change. There is a good deal else in the tradition, but on this much at least almost all the faithful would agree. It is a tradition still alive today, one hundred and fifty years after it received its most dramatic modern assertion, but a tradition never unchallenged, and today challenged with especial vigor. Large parts of Europe which played no small part in forming the tradition appear to have repudiated it entirely.

Moreover, within the democratic states themselves, fascist-minded groups are articulate and aggressive, while the democrats are confused and discouraged. The attempt to apply to the study of social problems methods successful in the natural sciences—an attempt thoroughly in accord with the democratic tradition—has added to the discomfiture of the democrats by casting doubt on some of their fundamental assumptions. The social science of the eighteenth-century founders of our tradition seems now to have been based on an untenable intellectualism. We simply cannot now think of man as a rational animal in the way a Holbach, a Godwin, or even a Bentham once thought of him. Experience has taken some of the rationalistic bloom off "government by discussion." To say this, however, is perhaps no more than to say that the eighteenth century cannot prescribe for the twentieth —which is in itself a statement in full accord with the democratic tradition. Holbach and Tom Paine may not have the whole answer to our contemporary dictators, but does this mean that there is no democratic answer? Surely not. A renewed democratic tradition may lack the freshness and innocence of the golden days that followed the fall of the Bastille (they were, by the way, very brief days), but it will still prove a going tradition.

Democracy has been a relatively rare political phenomenon, and would seem to depend for its existence on favoring conditions that in the past have been very difficult to maintain. Montesquieu was being more realistic than his vocabulary might now indicate when he said that the mainspring of a republic is "virtue." He seems to have meant that government by free discussion depends on those who discuss being pretty decent fellows, patient, good-tempered, informed, sensible, industrious, conditioned not to expect the impossible from themselves or from others. Thinkers as different as Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, and Machiavelli are in surprising agreement with Montesquieu. But we need not fall into Utopian exactions: the thing is a matter of balance, of something like a statistical generalization. A going democracy can absorb, or keep down, a lot of unfit material. Dozens of potential Hitlers are probably displaying their indecencies in the half-worlds of our big cities, as Hitler once displayed his in a Viennese poorhouse. A going democracy can put up with a considerable number of grafters, racketeers, pimps, show-offs, and Napoleons of finance, industry, amusement, education, and what not. But not with an unlimited number. Your average citizen of a democracy has got to be a fairly good human being, even to the extent of being a little priggish about it.

Moreover, this average citizen must not be too sorely tried by circumstances. Even with such consolations as a revealed religion can afford him, he does not bear up well under prolonged adversity. The decencies necessary to the democratic life cannot long be maintained in a population subject to serious economic want, to prolonged warfare, or to great and unchanging inequalities of wealth and social esteem. A great many men, even majorities, may be lifted briefly into heroism—a battle, a camp-meeting, a crusade, the siege of a Bastille—but few inductions from history are more certain than that this inhuman pitch of effort and excitement can not and does not last long. Populations long exposed to conditions that would try the endurance of a hero do not behave heroically—or democratically. They howl for a savior, and usually get him, and his name is often Hitler.

What is less obvious, and less studied—North Whitehead has made a beginning—is the upsetting effect of industrial and economic changes on the apparently necessary routines to which even democratic workers are conditioned. We have said that democracy depends on

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change. So it does, but clearly some changes can be made too fast and too recklessly. Democracy also depends on various subtle and none too well recognized balances. It may be that our efficiency engineers are too far ahead of democracy, and that not in a strictly Veblenian sense.

What we have managed to make of the heritage of 1776 and 1789 in the last century and a half has been influenced in large measure by the expansion of our civilization on two frontiers: the external frontier of empty lands in the Americas, Australia, Africa, and Siberia, and the internal frontier of applied science—the industrial revolution. The first, we are told often enough, is almost shut; the second also seems to be closing a bit, but for reasons less unavoidable. There is always the hope that applied science may yet include applied social science. If it does we shall have an almost boundless frontier for democratic expansion.

Democracy is in for harder sledding than it had throughout most of the nineteenth century. Yet it still seems to promote certain ways of life, even disciplines, which lead to adaptability, initiative, and cooperation, and these are assets in the most ruthlessly Darwinian of worlds. It has survived a lot in the last 150 years—dictators like the two Napoleons, contrary faiths, at least two world wars, and some economic depressions which, judging from the newspapers of the time, must have seemed almost as bad as this one. It is now, if in no heroic measure, some part of the personal emotions of millions of Frenchmen, Englishmen, Americans, and Scandinavians, and, though for the moment suppressed, of Germans, Italians, Spaniards, and Russians as well. It is a part of the way we see the world. This sesquicentennial anniversary may be celebrated under a cloud, but the chance that our children will celebrate a bicentennial anniversary in 1989 is at least as good as the chance that in 1973 Italy will celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the March on Rome, or that Germany in 1983 will hail the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Third Reich. For the external frontier is as closed to the totalitarians as it is to us; and we may believe that with all our failings the internal frontier, which is the frontier of human intelligence, foresight, and decency, is more accessible to us than to them.

Warn Japan Now!

BY NATHANIEL PEFFER

EUROPE'S crisis clamors more insistently for attention just now, but a crisis of the same order is in the making in the Far East. It is still one or two stages behind Europe's but it is moving in the same direction, and if not arrested it will arrive at the same point. This point can be described briefly as the instant when it will be necessary to choose between a Far Eastern Munich and war. And as Europe proves, a Munich is a postponement, not a prevention of war.

Tientsin has quieted for the moment, but only for the moment. The British and Japanese are negotiating for a settlement, with prospects for success highly doubtful, but meanwhile the foreign communities in Tientsin remain under blockade. They remain, that is, hostages in Japan's hands, with Japan given the opportunity of starving or terrorizing them into submission at its pleasure until it has wrung from Great Britain, and inferentially the other Western powers, compulsory support of its invasion of China. But as the first week of the blockade proved, this is more than a diplomatic manœuver. It contains inflammables that may ignite the whole world from the Far East. The Japanese army has tasted the sweets of power over Occidentals, and after its fashion will hunger for more. Given another opportunity, it will show even less restraint. It will not only strip and beat foreigners; there is every likelihood of excesses that will provoke fighting in Tientsin which, even if it is directed against the British, will inevitably spread. There are Americans in Tientsin, too.

Even a settlement in Tientsin satisfactory to the Japanese would not eliminate the danger. In fact, it would aggravate it. What has happened in Tientsin would be duplicated in Shanghai. For more than a year the Japanese have been demanding increased rights in Shanghai and making such inroads as they can. Should they have their way in Tientsin, they will renew their attacks on the International Settlement in Shanghai with redoubled vigor. For the Japanese have set out to extirpate or nullify Western possessions, rights, and interests in China, partly for their intrinsic worth and partly because they believe that will deal a blow to Chinese morale and deprive the Chinese of such help as they indirectly get from the existence of the foreign concessions. Tactics that proved successful in Tientsin would be repeated in Shanghai, under conditions in which international complications could not possibly be avoided.

In all probability nothing can be done now to save Tientsin. Even if the British succeed in winning a compromise which will enable them to remain in the city the concessions will be under ceaseless blackmail. British

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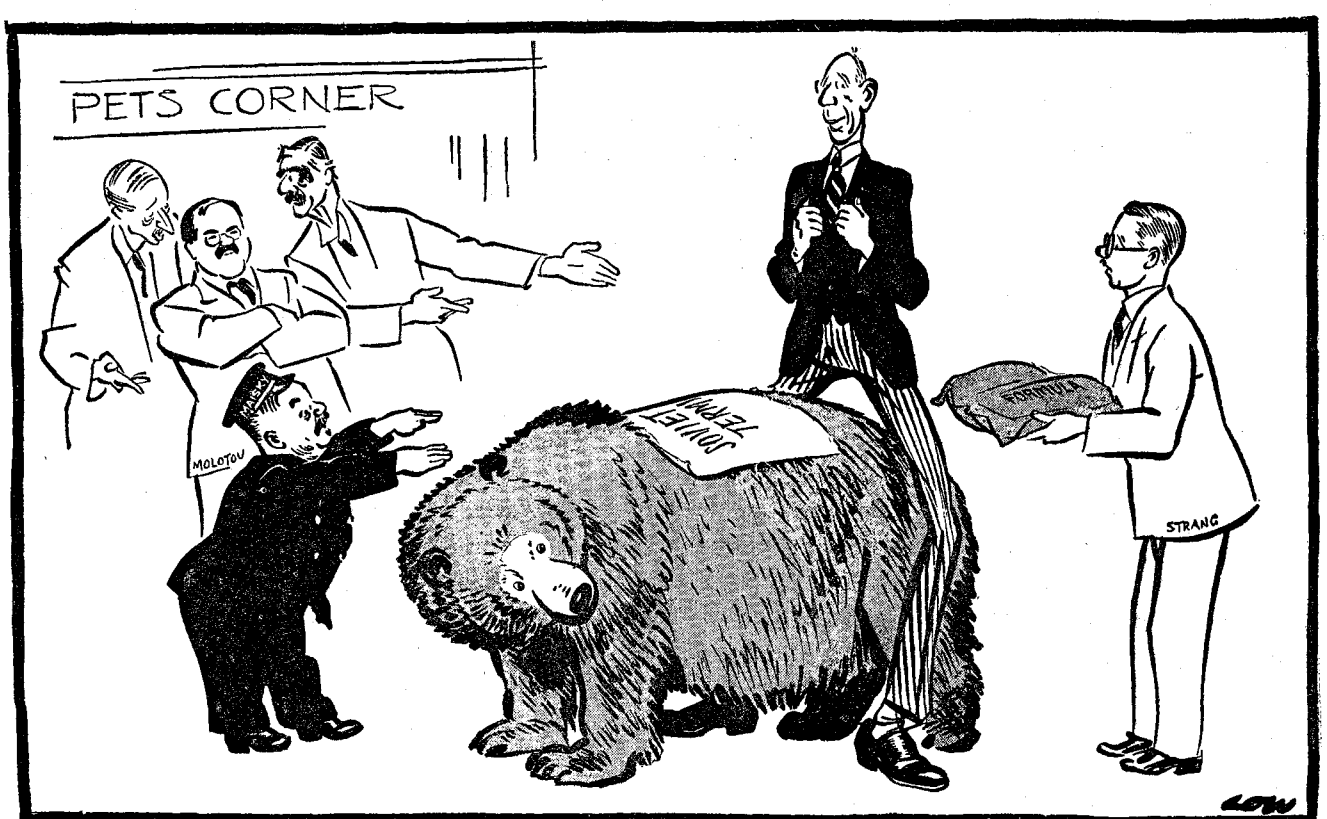
and French control will be a diplomatic fiction. Whether the British blundered by waiting too long to make a stand or were helpless because of the German threat, they have already lost. They have put themselves in a position in which they must either fight, which they cannot do, or, for all practical purposes, surrender.

It is not too late, however, to prevent a similar situation in Shanghai—and that is vital. There are some 40,000 Occidentals in Shanghai, including 4,000 civilian Americans and a United States Marine force of 1,000. There are British and American war vessels in the harbor. There are at least 3,000,000 Chinese in and around the Settlement and the French Concession. To blockade Shanghai as Tientsin was blockaded, to shut off food, institute searches, and make personal attacks without provoking a succession of clashes between foreign and Japanese troops is possible but too improbable to warrant consideration. And to yield to the Japanese in Shanghai as in Tientsin in order not to provoke formal conflict would be to invite a cataclysm. The Japanese for two years now have been marking Chinese individuals and groups for accounting. If their army were to enter the Settlement there would be slaughter and sacking of a kind and on a scale that has not been seen since the Middle Ages. Immunity for the 40,000 white men and women in the city would be impossible even if the Japanese soldiers did not get out of control, as they always have in the past. In short, the Western countries, and the United States in particular, would find themselves compelled to fight or to surrender under conditions which they would find intolerable. Without any desire to be melodramatic or alarmist, I believe that if the Japanese attempt to reduce the International Settlement at Shanghai there will be war. And the point is this: if they are not forewarned in time they will attempt to do just that.

Thus the Western powers would have to choose reluctantly between going to war on an issue that is not intrinsically worth a war or making a surrender that would not only be unpalatable but would be a prelude to more egregious demands and more unpalatable surrenders. And this time the United States would be directly involved, for it is in Shanghai that most of its Far Eastern interests lie. The British complaisance over Tientsin may well be attributed to a desire to shift the test to Shanghai, where the Americans have so great a stake.

As contemporary Europe proves, there is only one way to deal with "Munichs"—prevent them from arising. Once the situation is at hand, there is nothing for it but to fight or to invite further aggressions by yielding with the prospect of having to fight ultimately under more unfavorable circumstances. A Far Eastern Munich can be forestalled in only one way: by doing early in the summer of 1939 what Chamberlain did not do early in the summer of 1938 in Europe, namely, to serve notice.

This time Great Britain cannot serve notice, because



ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO SIT DOWN

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Germany stands in the way. The United States can, and it is idle to argue that its stake in the Far East is negligible. In the first place, historically this is not true. In the second place, it will be irrelevant if United States marines are mowed down by Japanese machine guns when they go to the rescue of American civilians.

The United States has one powerful weapon which can be effective without being unsheathed. That is Japan's fear of American military and economic might and its manifest desire to keep this country from becoming hostile. To this factor alone is attributable such restraint as Japan has shown thus far. Only this fear can prevent Japan now from creating a situation that will leave the United States little or no choice but to intervene. If the Japanese know unmistakably *in advance* that there is a line beyond which they will not be permitted to go, they may reconcile themselves to remaining on the safe side.

That line should be drawn at Shanghai. The Japanese must be informed *now* and in words that cannot be misunderstood that the International Settlement at Shanghai is international, its status guaranteed by a network of treaties and subject to change only by international action, and that any Japanese attempt to change its status by unilateral action will automatically invoke penalties.

By way of pointing the warning, plans should be made in advance. There is already, in Japan's discrimination against American trade in North China and on the Yangtsze River, ample ground for imposing countervailing duties against Japanese goods. Other retaliatory measures can be prepared—denunciation of commercial treaties, restriction of exports to Japan in graduated stages measured by the seriousness of Japanese offenses, and, if necessary, the closing of outlying American ports—the Philippines, for example—to Japanese trade. Meanwhile the extension of additional credits to China would accentuate the warning.

The last year has shown that immunity from risk of war cannot be preserved in the contemporary world by inaction. The negative course has been all but fatal in Europe. It will be similarly disastrous in the Far East. Only unequivocal words and preparations to translate them into action will persuade the Japanese to choose discretion. Otherwise the West must be drawn into the Far Eastern war, and under present world conditions the West includes the United States. In the interest of the future peace of Asia, all else aside, it is better that the Chinese-Japanese war be settled in the Far East. Then China, if it escapes defeat, can be master in its own home and there will be no further Western complications. It is highly important to avoid converting the present war into a conflict between Japan and the West over Western rights in China. The next few weeks are crucial—as crucial as the weeks of June and July in Central Europe last summer. In September it was too late. If we wait much longer, it will be too late in the Far East.

This Is America

IV. THE GARNER COUNTRY

BY CHARLES CURTIS MUNZ

"IF ROOSEVELT doesn't run, I'm for Garner." This is the answer that the Southwest most often gives to the question of 1940. It comes from ranchers, from drillers in the oil fields, from sharecroppers in East Texas, from Spanish-American tenant farmers in New Mexico. Yet most of these people believe in the New Deal, and know that Garner stands at the very opposite pole from Roosevelt. Why, then, does there exist this widespread confusion of thought and purpose?

Put part of it down to the obvious fact that Garner, as the favorite son not only of Texas but to a considerable extent of the whole Southwest, appeals strongly to sectional pride. Put more of it down to the fact that any liberal candidate, other than Roosevelt, represents only part of the New Deal. For example, Wallace stands in the public mind for the AAA, Hopkins for the WPA, and the enemies of both organizations just about cancel out their friends. The New Deal has been singularly impotent in producing a spiritual and political heir.

The Southwest will give its electoral vote to the Democratic candidate in 1940. This is certainly true of Texas with 23 electoral votes and Oklahoma with 11; it is true also of New Mexico and Arizona with their three apiece unless the Republican vote should roll in like a tidal wave. It matters little whether the candidate be Roosevelt, Garner, Farley, Clark, Hull, Murphy, or the darkest of the dark horses. Farley or Murphy could carry the Southwest with ease, for anti-Catholic feeling has declined since all four states voted against Smith in 1928. A Jewish candidate could carry the Southwest, too, for that matter, if one were nominated; for anti-Semitism has almost vanished since the Ku Klux Klan fell into a consumptive invalidism in 1924.

But in the struggle for control of the Democratic

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Party, it is plain that in the Southwest Roosevelt alone can win for the New Deal. Senator Josh Lee of Oklahoma writes me: "I am convinced that the people are whole-heartedly for Roosevelt and will vote for him overwhelmingly if a candidate in 1940." That seems to be a sound view not only of Oklahoma but of all four states in the Southwest. People will vote for Roosevelt because he sums up the whole New Deal, and especially because he personifies it in spirit.

The repeated failure of recovery measures has not been charged against the President. Business leaders are blamed instead, for the Southwest has a tradition of finding the origin of all its troubles in Wall Street. Besides, much of the Southwest, especially Oklahoma and Texas, escaped a part of the 1937-38 decline. This escape helped the political fortunes of the New Deal, though the credit for it should go largely to the oil industry; or to the motoring public, who will buy gasoline in good season and bad. All four Southwestern states now produce oil, the first well in Arizona having been brought in 35 miles southwest of Phoenix as recently as June 22. Texas is the nation's greatest oil-producing state; Oklahoma is third, outranked only by Texas and California. In 1938 the oil production of Texas and Oklahoma was 640,067,631 barrels, more than half of the whole production of the United States. Texas alone in 1938 produced 39.2 per cent of the nation's oil, and 23.7 per cent of the world's output.

Crude oil currently brings about a dollar a barrel, which means that Texas and Oklahoma receive about $650,000,000 a year from crude oil alone. Yet independent oil producers and the men who drill the wells complain that the cream of the profits is skimmed off by the North and East. This is all a part of the wail of most of the country west of the Mississippi and south of the Ohio that it pays too much interest, is discriminated against on freight rates, and, in general, as President Roosevelt put it, "is in hock to the North." The cry is true enough in general, but it is also a lazy excuse for each section to throw up its hands and weep, "We can't do anything about our share-croppers, or our migratory workers, until we get out of the clutches of the Wall Street bankers." Incidentally, however, it does serve the useful purpose of splitting the business opposition to Roosevelt. Many small independent oil operators, for example, align themselves with Roosevelt because they feel themselves squeezed between the big oil companies and the bankers.

The stability of the oil industry is currently threatened by low tank-wagon prices for gasoline and overproduction of crude. Sinclair has recently led the way toward higher tank-wagon prices, and the industry can probably solve that problem itself. But it is doubtful if anything short of rigid federal control will ever end the threat which always confronts the oil industry of drowning in its own crude supplies. Yet the big oil men are deathly afraid of federal regulation, and their sweet dreams of two-dollar oil are disturbed by nightmares of Harold Ickes with a gas flare, a somewhat sour-faced Diogenes prowling among the derricks in search of an honest man.

Oil brings more money than does cotton to the Southwest, but cotton affects more than three times as many people. How this works out in terms of human lives may be seen from the fact that while in Texas in 1938 oil was dividing $550,000,000 among the 800,000 people depending on it, cotton was dividing $129,000,000, less than one-fourth as much, among more than three times as many dependents, 2,700,000. From this point of view, the cotton industry was only one-twelfth as efficient as the oil industry.

Cotton has always been a poor man's crop. Poor men grow cotton, and growing cotton makes men poor. Exporters bewailing the loss of foreign markets may forget these unhappy facts, but cotton farmers do not. Tell a farmer how the New Deal has ruined the cotton market and he will probably remind you that before the New Deal, in 1932, under Herbert Hoover, he sold cotton for as low as four cents. Moreover, farmers would be in a bad way without their New Deal checks, and they know it. A survey of ten Texas cotton counties revealed that benefit payments in 1938 made up a third of the farmers' income; and that even with the benefit payments the farmers received only 53 per cent of what was their normal income prior to 1931.

Nobody has much hope that the international cotton conference called by Secretary Wallace to meet in Washington on September 5 will discover a solution to the cotton problem. But it is so serious that men are now grasping at straws. There is little disposition among growers to blame either Roosevelt or Wallace for failing to find a solution. The general attitude is that the New Deal is doing the best it can. One farmer told me, "I don't figure you ought to shoot a man while he's tryin'."

Cotton exporters are not so charitable. They've been in a shooting mood for four years. Exporters want a big crop and an open world market; they care little about the price and less about the men and women who plant and pick the crop. The government's loan policy has helped to bring the export market to a sixty-year low, and feeling is so bitter among exporters that it is as much as one's life is worth to go into the Houston Cotton Exchange, and suggest quietly, even to a stenographer in an outer office, that Mr. Roosevelt is a kind man, if deluded on the subject of cotton. But just to illustrate how confused political loyalties can be, the same cotton exporters who have no kind word for Mr. Roosevelt's Mr. Wallace have high praise for Mr. Roosevelt's Mr. Hull and his reciprocal trade agreements.

After oil and cotton comes livestock as the third of

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the major products on which the Southwest bases its economy. Dust storms and acreage controls on cotton and wheat have reversed a long-time trend from cattle-raising to farming. In Texas in 1938 the income from livestock, amounting to $303,000,000, was only 7 per cent less than the income from crops, with livestock increasing and crops decreasing. This trend if continued may some day jeopardize the cattle market, but for the present prices are good and cattlemen have been fairly prosperous since 1934.

Mayor Maury Maverick

Roosevelt's order to purchase 48,000 pounds of Argentine corned beef for the navy was whipped to a froth by his enemies all through the Southwest. But most cattlemen know that Argentine corned beef is on the shelves of every cross-roads store. Very little beef is corned in the United States. Nevertheless, cattlemen are jealous of the home market, and if prices were endangered, the incident might be used effectively against Roosevelt.

The cattleman, with a jealous eye on the American market, tends to be an extreme isolationist. The cotton man is more likely to take an interest in foreign affairs. But the Southwest, including even the cotton ports, is interested more in Latin America than in Europe. The Southwesterner could look with equanimity upon the destruction of democracy in Europe—partly because Europe is remote, partly because he feels that people like the English with a king and queen and all that aristocratic flapdoodle can't be very good democrats anyway. But if fascism were to threaten to gain a foothold in South America or Mexico, the Southwesterner would be much concerned, and he might even be willing to fight about it.

The Southwest is so eager to do business with Mexico, and to encourage tourist travel back and forth, that good-will junkets are almost as common along the border as Mexican jumping beans. But relations with Mexico have been clouded for the last year by the oil expropriation of March 18, 1938. Except for the big oil men, who would like to see a stout stick waved in the direction of Mexico from Washington, the average Southwesterner would gladly see the problem settled on reasonable terms. He feels that Mexico was completely in the wrong and shouldn't have done it at all; but now that it has done it, he is eager for the United States to make as good terms as possible, without kicking up a lot of bad feeling that will hurt the tourist trade.

On the whole, the Southwest prefers the good-neighbor policy. That is why President Roosevelt's strong stand against the dictators, which would have been unpopular in the Southwest if it had concerned only Europe, has been popular because it seemed designed also to protect American interests in Mexico and South America.

Maury Maverick's election as mayor of San Antonio has put liberals in the Southwest into a fighting mood again. Before the returns were all in on election night, liberals were jubilantly crying, "Next we'll get old Jack Garner." That cry was a trifle optimistic, for Cactus Jack, the poker-playing sage of Uvalde, will be a hard man to beat in the Southwest, especially in Texas. Roosevelt alone can do it, and then only if he makes an open fight. But if a fight is to be made against Garner, Maury Maverick has certain obvious qualifications for acting as field marshal for Roosevelt.

In these heated days Maverick's excellent war record will do him no harm. His good family connections will be an asset; his grandfather was a mayor of San Antonio a hundred years ago, and also a signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence. But more important, Maverick really likes to fight. He believes in democracy. He has a compassionate feeling for the disinherited. And finally he has a strong hold on the Mexican vote.

There are nearly two million Mexicans and Spanish-Americans in the Southwest. They have recently been awakening to political consciousness. It was the Mexican pecan-shellers or *nueceros* who were largely responsible for Maverick's impressive victory. Moreover, when Maverick took office on June 1, the governor of the State of Coahuila, Mexico, sent an official delegation, thus making Maverick's inaugural a symbol of international amity.

Maverick's election as mayor wipes out his defeat last year for reelection to Congress, and puts him again on the political highroad. When he went back to Washington after his defeat in 1938 the liberals had a party of consolation, a sort of wake, for him. They told Maury how much the country would miss him, and cried so much into each other's drinks that they spoiled the scotch-and-soda. But Maury was not impressed.

That was the trouble with liberals; too many tears and not enough fight; too many theories and not enough votes. "What this country needs," says Maverick, "is fewer bureaucrats and brain-trusters, and more politicians who are honest but can still get the votes." He knew he had failed of reelection because he had neglected his home fences, and he decided to go back to start all over again. He believes that it is important first of all to make democracy work at home, in the cities and the counties, the weakest divisions of American government.

The mayoralty campaign was bitter. Maverick was

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called every kind of radical. "The red fog rolled up so thick I could hardly see," says Maury. It was recognized that the result would depend largely on how great a majority he could get among the Mexicans on the West Side. On election night the West Side boxes were slow in reporting. Maverick was a little ahead in the early returns, but only by a couple of hundred votes, and several machine boxes certain to go strongly against him were still out. Then Precinct 33 from the West Side was reported. Out of 393 votes cast, 303 were for Maverick.

Maverick's first job will be to clean up the corruption in San Antonio's city hall. He has been in office a little more than a month now, and has made a fine start. But he will also be in the center of the political ferment that is just beginning to brew in the Southwest; and in the South, too. A week after his election as mayor, in a speech at Austin, Maverick put himself at the head of the anti-Garner forces by consigning to the Garner camp "every Roosevelt hater; every enemy of progress; every anti-Democrat; and a trainload of carpet-baggers and the most reactionary Republicans who would like to see the Democratic Party lose in 1940."

After it had been made known in Washington that regardless of what Roosevelt does, Garner's name will be put before the Democratic convention next June, Maverick repeated the substance of his Austin speech. Since Roosevelt has not announced his intentions for 1940, Maverick asked for an uninstructed delegation from Texas. His speeches must be looked upon as at once a notice and an invitation; a notice that there is some one in Texas who is ready and willing to come to grips with Garner, and an invitation to Roosevelt to get into the fight.

The subject should not be dismissed without casual reference to one of Roosevelt's uncounted assets and one of Garner's uncounted liabilities: Roosevelt's son, Elliott. In his capacity as a political expert and Fort Worth radio commentator, Elliott says many nice things about Garner, but he is not doing Cactus Jack any good. For Southwesterners within the sound of Elliott's voice are a somewhat old-fashioned lot; and although they observe the Ten Commandments no better than do people elsewhere, they do believe that if a son cannot honor his father, he should at least remain silent.

Wendell Willkie Is Wuined

BY McALISTER COLEMAN

THE silly season was with us earlier than usual this year. Ordinarily the official opening is the week-end of the Fourth when a dearth of news sends reporters to the morgue in search of shirt-tails for the perennial sea-serpent stories or to Long Island to cover the annual address of Nicholas Murray Butler on the State of the Nation.

In this screwball year of 1939, however, the silly season got well under way early in the spring and it now gives promise of staying with us until after the next Presidential election. It started under the spiritual if not the zodiacal sign of Pisces. Fish talk was mingled with the prevalent baby-talk of the swung nursery rhymes. The reversion of a whole people first to childhood days and then to their finny origins is an interesting commentary on our times. Inaugurated appropriately enough in our institutions of higher learning, the escape to idiocy soon swept the country. It was a short step from the gulping of goldfish to the mass singing of that rollicking ballad that begins:

> Fee iddy fishies fimmin' in de poo,
> Fee iddy fishies an' de mummy fishie too.

Future historians will doubtless set down this flight to the primal ooze as an indication of collective yearning for some sort of fundamental security. However that may be, examples of the delights of idiocy ranging from the speeches of neo-Bryanite Senators from the Free Silver states of New Jersey and Vermont to the current writings of Wendell Willkie, president of the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation since 1933, are abundantly at hand for anthologists of the fantastic. And since the name of the top Man of Vision is a headline commonplace, let the anthologists begin with Wendell's literary outpourings now flowing from the *Atlantic* to the *Saturday Evening Post*.

His theme song is the Ruination Blues. Mr. Willkie has, it seems, been ruined, not through any flaw in his impeccable public character, Heaven forfend, but rather because of the "cruel" and "brutal" (to use two of Wendell's favorite adjectives) machinations of a ruthless federal government. You will recall that everything was lovely in the Tennessee Valley prior to 1933—happy share-croppers whistling while they worked, contented factory hands singing at the looms, smiling housewives lighting kerosene lamps. Then along came George Norris with his crackpot schemes for getting cheap electricity to the Valley people, together with other things, and the wailing of the Willkie was heard in the land. Since then it has risen to a poignant crescendo.

By a fortunate coincidence, those of us who constitute

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the underlying consumers are now permitted a close-up view of just what a utility man has in mind when he announces that he is ruined. At the very moment that Mr. Willkie's article called, "Brace Up, America!" was being acclaimed by the readers of the *Atlantic*, there appeared the annual report of the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation, summarized in the New York *Times* as follows: "The report of the Commonwealth and Southern Corporation and subsidiaries for the twelve months ending on May 31, 1939 . . . showed a consolidated net income of $14,144,128, after all expenses and charges. This was equal, after preferred dividend charges, to 15 cents each on the corporation's 33,673,328 shares of common stock outstanding and compared with $4,800,842, or 3 cents a share, in the twelve months ended on May 31, 1938. Net income in May, 1939, was $1,014,096, against $620,949 in May, 1938."

In the version of the Willkie dirge revised for the benefit of *Saturday Evening Post* readers and adorned with a picture of a disconsolate man drooping over a park bench, whom for a moment we took to be Mr. Willkie himself, we come upon the familiar laments—"the effects of excessive taxation," "the fear of government itself," "our democracy will vanish in the chaos of national bankruptcy." Scarcely were the tears dry upon this manuscript when we were informed that the government had been so touched by Mr. Willkie's recital that it had agreed to pay ten million dollars more for his Tennessee subsidiary than the government thought it was worth. Then the President in one of his less brutal moods sought to appease Mr. Willkie and his fellow shirt-tearers still further by assuring them that he had no hate on the utilities. But Wendell was inconsolable. He kept right on keening until the other day the House passed a measure looking to the hamstringing of TVA. In the language of de fishies "Dey fam and dey fam all over de dam."

Ordinarily you'd expect this would make Mr. Willkie very happy indeed. In fact it was regarded as such a victory for the forces of "liberal business" that a move was started to nominate Mr. Willkie for President on the Republican ticket in 1940. But still things were terrible. It turned out that Mr. Willkie had hollered so loud that he had gummed up TVA funds ear-marked for the purchase of his own property.

It's all very discouraging. And somewhat mystifying. However, Mr. Willkie is writing a book telling us how to get back our "neglected liberty—that of free enterprise." The temperature rises as we await its publication. At such a time what more natural than to turn to the author of "Iddy Biddy Poo" for the answers to the problems posed by Mr. Willkie and his associated Jeremiahs? Aren't they all summed up in those immortal words: "Boop, boop, dittum, dottum, wattum-Chui"?

Everybody's Business

Prosperous Sweden

Stockholm, June 23

SWEDEN has undeniable claims to be considered the most prosperous country in the world. Unemployment is no longer a special problem. Outside of two industries where unusual circumstances prevail the number of jobless is hardly more than can be accounted for by seasonal factors and normal labor turnover. The sharp recession which hit the United States and Britain in the fall of 1937 was only reflected here after a considerable interval and then very mildly. The index of production compiled by the Federation of Swedish Industries (1935 equals 100) achieved a record level of 123 in the last quarter of 1937. By the third quarter of 1938 it had slipped back to 114 but thereafter the rally in American business was paralleled and by February this year the index was 119. It has almost certainly risen several points since then.

Of course neither employment nor volume of production is, by itself, an adequate measure of prosperity. If this were the case, Germany today would be the most flourishing of all countries. But the enormous rise in German production is represented largely by goods which have no consumptive value in the present nor productive value in the future and, far from permitting an improved standard of living, it has led to a definite deterioration. In Sweden, on the other hand, there has been a slow but steady improvement since the end of the great depression. Real wages now are some 10 per cent higher than in 1929 and in addition the workers have benefited by largely increased social expenditures.

There has also been since the depression a definite improvement in the income of the farmers, who form an important section of the population. This is largely due to the efforts of the government, in which the Labor and Farmer parties collaborate, to raise and control agricultural prices. Its policy has necessitated some increase in the cost of living and, to that extent, has involved a sacrifice on the part of the workers. But the government, with the general approval of its supporters, decided that if the country's economy was to be properly balanced, the disproportionately low share of the national income accruing to the farming community must be increased. Moreover the measures of control work both ways so that when the world price of cereals rose sharply in 1936 Swedish grain prices were not permitted to follow.

It may of course be only a coincidence that Sweden not merely is the most prosperous country in the world today but, apart from the Soviet Union, has a greater proportion of its economy subject to collective ownership and control than any other. Compared to the degree of socialism accepted here quite calmly by all classes, the "socialism" of the New Deal which causes Wall Street such apoplexy is not very impressive. Here practically all public utilities are owned either by the state or the municipalities. The major part of the railroad system has long been the property of the nation and the few remaining private lines are about to be taken over. The state telephone service is both efficient and cheap and a high percentage of homes are wired.

Electric power production is largely in the hands of the

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state and the municipalities, though there are also a number of closely controlled private undertakings. Long before TVA was thought of, the joint exploitation of navigable waterways and hydro-electric stations by a state organization was an old story in Sweden. Many of the best power sites were on the extensive publicly owned lands and instead of handing these over to private enterprise the state proceeded to develop them.

Other state economic interests include the tobacco monopoly, a major share in the liquor monopoly, some 20 per cent of the forests, and large participations in the great iron-ore mines of the north and in the Boliden goldfield, the most important in Europe. Recently it has entered the field of road transportation in competition with private interests. On the whole it may be said that the state has closed the chief avenues to private monopoly and kept a strong hand on the exploitation of natural resources.

The various public enterprises are managed on business lines by a number of separate administrations whose budgets are not lumped in with the national budget in the haphazard way which we still follow in the United States. Expenditures for railroad electrification, or for the extension of a power station, are properly treated as a capital outlay to be provided out of loans and not as a charge on current revenues. Nor do the state enterprises as a whole require a draft on taxes in order to make their accounts balance. On the contrary they contribute each year to the national treasury a sum which not only meets the interest on the whole national debt but in good years provides a substantial contribution to general revenues.

For all this, the capitalist survives in Sweden and apparently prospers. Practically the whole field of manufacturing industry is open to him but, since accumulation by way of monopoly is barred, he has had to depend for success on inventive skill and organization. It is necessary to add, however, that banking finance, which is largely concentrated in four big institutions, exercises a great influence over industry. This power seems at present to be used with some caution; no doubt because the government is watchful for abuses and has weapons available to check them.

Is it fair to assume a connection between the partial socialism of Sweden and the way in which it has been able to push through the great depression to a new era of prosperity? I believe it is. The fact that the state was already responsible for a large part of the annual new investment of the country made it much easier to develop and carry out a public-works program. Again, the restriction of the scope of private enterprise has tended to check the growth of great fortunes and thus prevented, to the same extent as with us, the accumulation of savings in excess of amounts which can be absorbed by new investments. Equally, it limited the area in which that sensitive plant, "business confidence," could operate as a decisive factor.

Business spokesmen here naturally hesitate to endorse this analysis, just as they minimize the influence of government policies in overcoming the crisis. Their version is that the depression was beaten by normal recovery forces assisted by luck—for instance, the rearmament demand for iron ore. In government circles the element of luck is not denied, but it is claimed, and I feel with justice, that without economic planning recovery would have been less complete and less stable.

KEITH HUTCHISON

In the Wind

ALLEN ZOLL, leader of American Patriots, Inc., will have something else to explain after his trial for attempting to extort $7,500 from WMCA radio officials. The Institute for Propaganda Analysis has obtained a copy of a letter Zoll wrote to the Japanese Institute, official Japanese propaganda agency, several months ago, in which he offered the services of his organization to help "cultivate goodwill" for Japan's cause in America. He boasted that A. Claude Gill, formerly an expert on "communism" for the Hearst papers and an official of numerous patriotic societies, is one of his aides. Zoll said that he would help the Japanese fight "communism" for $5,000 a month. Whether his offer has been accepted isn't known.

JAPANESE-BRITISH relations may be further aggravated by the work of a Tokyo liquor merchant. He's just issued a brand of whisky bearing this label: "As supplied to His Majesty King George VI, bottled at Buckingham Palace under the personal supervision of the king." The whisky is so strong that two shots destroys consciousness.

THE BOSTON Branch of the Workers' Defense League has just issued this circular letter on the Maritime Union strike against Standard Oil: "Standard Oil and its subsidiaries cannot continue these tactics unless they can sell their products. On the enclosed sheet is to be found a list of these products. It is contrary to the laws of the Commonwealth to advocate a secondary BOYCOTT. Therefore this letter has been careful to avoid advocating a popular boycott of all Standard Oil products."

DESPITE NEW JERSEY'S newly enacted law against the wearing of "foreign uniforms," Nazi Bundmen continue to parade in the same costumes. They insist that both their organization and their uniforms are "American." The fact is that the Bund's uniforms, although tailored in the United States, were designed in Berlin by the Propaganda Ministry.

NORMAN BEL GEDDES is designing a new format for the New York *Post*. . . . The magazine *Psychiatry* published in its June issue a solemn analysis of the origins of pornographic limericks; most of the last lines are omitted. . . . George Sokolsky is preparing an attack for *Liberty* on the Institute for Propaganda Analysis. . . . A traveler recently returned from Germany reports that German students are being taught that Holland will soon be part of the Reich.

FROM THE New York *Times* July 6: "Mr. Chamberlain is determined not to bring Mr. Churchill into the cabinet at this moment, but even the Prime Minister's most loyal rooters do not care to say Mrs. Churchill can be kept out for good."

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

SOME months ago I was warned when in Washington to keep my eye on Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana. My informants insisted that he was the man who at the proper time would appear from behind the Garner candidacy. Hence I was much interested to read last week that Senator Johnson of Colorado had come out for Mr. Wheeler for the nomination, and this just the day after the Senator had spiked the story that he was being approached by pro-Roosevelt persons to get him to agree to run for the Vice-Presidency with the President. Mr. Wheeler promptly announced that he would not do so and that he was absolutely opposed to giving the President a third term. Well, there was no dodging the issue there. But when he was suggested for the Presidency Mr. Wheeler remained modestly silent. Senator Johnson declared that Mr. Wheeler is a real liberal "whose record for liberalism was made long before 1933, and who is so honest and trustworthy that he holds the respect and confidence of the most conservative Democrats in the land." He added that Senator Wheeler "has been a loyal supporter of President Roosevelt except on a very few occasions."

I can certify that Mr. Johnson is right in saying that Burt Wheeler's liberalism antedates the New Deal, for I campaigned with him when he was a candidate for the Vice-Presidency on the La Follette ticket in 1924. I then found him sound by my tests and beliefs, courageous, quite willing to be on the unpopular side, and an extremely effective campaigner. We were in the aftermath of the degraded Harding Administration, with Coolidge in the White House trying to gloss over the crookedness of the sale of the government's oil lands and Senator Fall's acceptance of a bribe handed to him in a little black bag. Senator Wheeler turned out to be a remarkable actor, with a great sense of the dramatic. His experiences as a prosecuting attorney in Montana stood him in excellent stead. He had an empty chair placed on the stage near him, made an imaginary culprit take his seat, and then proceeded to cross-examine the imaginary person so skillfully and eloquently that the audience fairly gasped. Of course he repeated the phantom answers as if they had been made and so gave the spellbound listeners a wonderful picture of what had happened in the oil scandals.

Now it is alleged that he has forsworn all his liberalism, become the tool of the interests he first opposed, and a reactionary. The chief reason for this is that he fought the President's court-packing plan and the first Reorganization Bill, and some other measures. When he ran for reelection in Montana he was bitterly attacked by the left-wingers, who made the same charge of his having gone over to the enemy. His defeat was freely prophesied, but he won easily. He was the extremely skillful general in charge of the opposition to the Supreme Court reorganization bill, and it was his strategy which succeeded. He kept himself considerably in the background. Now that opposition does not seem a sin to me because I appeared before the Senate Committee to testify against the packing of the Supreme Court. But there is a school of reformers to whom any differing from F. D. R. is a sin.

During these last ten years Burton Wheeler has become one of the foremost American authorities on our railroads while acting as chairman of the Senate committee dealing with railroad problems. He has deliberately steeped himself in this subject, believing that somebody in the Senate must do it. In doing so he has put aside opportunities for leadership in other fields and spoken far less on popular questions than in the past, which doubtless leads some people to believe that he is less interested in progress. I do not now know if he really has drifted from his former progressive moorings; I shall await proof of it.

Another public man whose name keeps coming to the front is Secretary Hull. Were he younger, physically stronger, and an effective campaigner we should hear a great deal of his candidacy. I have been much interested by the fact that two of the ablest Washington correspondents, Raymond Clapper of the Scripps-Howard newspapers and J. Fred Essary of the Baltimore *Sun*, have come out for Mr. Hull, using, curiously enough, almost the same language on different occasions. Said Mr. Clapper: "If I were God, I'd make Cordell Hull the Presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. That is the practical thing for the party to do." Mr. Essary tells me that whenever he presents Mr. Hull's name to an audience the applause is long and loud. Yet I do not find anybody in the profession who thinks that there is any chance of nominating Mr. Hull. Tennessee is no more a pivotal state than is Burton Wheeler's Montana. But more than that, it is known that Mr. Hull is not popular with the New Dealers because at heart he is opposed to so many of the New Deal policies. It is still felt in Washington that no man opposed by the President can get the Democratic nomination. Personally I am not so sure about that, but that is the prevailing belief.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

Notes by the Way

ONE OF America's gifts to civilization, and I say it brazenly, has been the mass production of innumerable commodities at low prices. Soviet Russia is perhaps the best point of vantage from which to get an objective view of this phenomenon which we take so much for granted; there one realizes that the ten-cent store, figuratively speaking, is one of the wonders of the modern world. But the view is only less striking from other European countries.

Our preoccupation, as a nation, with things, which has at once stimulated and been stimulated by mass production of commodities, has been deplored by countless social critics; and certainly there is a suggestion of inner poverty in the spectacle of a man driving a car at fifty miles an hour with a radio roaring in his ears. Radicals are likely to write down this love of gadgets as another sign that Americans are hopelessly bourgeois. I think it is childish rather than bourgeois and not at all hopeless. It is slowly coming to be realized that socialism, which presumably radicals aim at, can exist only in the midst of plenty, including plenty of gadgets. It seems clear to me that if we ever reach maturity it will be by way of outgrowing our dependence on things through surfeit rather than through renunciation. For better or for worse, Americans have not been schooled to renunciation. Meanwhile the fact that the farmer plows his fields with a tractor to the accompaniment of a radio and that automobiles and automatic ice-boxes are passing into the category of necessities rather than luxuries for great sections of the population is to me a social good. Even radicals have been known to take pleasure in fast cars and handsome bathrooms; yet I suspect you would find that the average American has the vague but deep impression that socialism means dividing what he has with other people instead of increased prosperity for everyone except the Morgans and the Rockefellers and the other denizens of the higher income brackets. This is partly the fault of the radicals themselves, who still suffer from the Puritan asceticism of Cotton Mather and to whom the economy of abundance is still somehow immoral. Their tack should be to make Americans want more, not less. It wouldn't do any harm if radicals came out oftener for the American bathroom and the electric razor; it might even help to dispel the picture of reds as long-bearded and slightly soiled. Radicals could stand a touch of glamor.

I personally consider the American bathroom an element in the good life. But I want a great deal more. I want, for instance, what Europeans take for granted, books so cheap that I can own every book I've ever liked or thought I'd like, so cheap that lending books would be a pure pleasure from which one could afford to expect no return. What's more, I think that the desire for books is far more widespread than highbrows believe and that it can be enormously increased by the stimulant that has helped to create demand for other commodities, namely low prices. Make good books as cheap and easy to get as pulp magazines are today and buyers will not be lacking, even in benighted America. One of the strongest impulses in the average American is to get something reputed very good for very little. This may not be an admirable motive for buying good books but it will put them in a strategic position, and good books have always had a way of fighting their own battles.

The worst criticism of our ten-cent-store civilization—and it is a devastating one—is that good books are still a luxury. The average European may lack a tiled bathroom; he usually has a library, for in every country in Europe books old and new, good and mediocre, are incredibly cheap and abundant. I would prefer a library to a bathroom; but there is no good reason why I should not have both; the reproach is not that so many Americans have demanded and obtained bathrooms but that they have not insisted also on having libraries at a commensurate price. Up to now the publishing business in America has been based on a unit price in the neighborhood of $2.50. Mass production has passed it by. A publisher can show you figure by figure why he must charge $2.50 for a light novel, and the figures are convincing within their terms of reference. It is the terms of reference that one cannot accept as final. If you assume that a book will not on the average sell more than 2,500 copies then you set the price at $2.50 or $3 or $4, depending on the cost of the book and upon the price you think the limited traffic will bear. That means, of course, that in most cases you are automatically limiting its sale to 2,500 or less. If you strike a best-seller, the price of $2.50, once the initial costs have been paid, yields a nice profit. The publisher may tell you that this profit merely takes up the slack on the less fortunate books. This argument may or may not be valid, depending on the number of unprofitable books the publisher issues. But publishers do not as a group pay the highest income taxes and it seems very likely that the average publisher loses money on 80 per cent of his books and makes his profit on 20 per cent if only for the reason that he operates under a mechanism which mass production has made anachronistic in other fields.

Another argument sometimes advanced, that cheap books do not sell, may also have a limited validity, but only, again, within the terms of this mechanism. The publishing business has not been geared to the merchandising of cheap books; since, given his limited market, a publisher makes more money on a $2.50 book than on a dollar book, he naturally spends his advertising appropriations and his selling energy on the $2.50 item. Booksellers do likewise. Publishers and booksellers are business men first of all, even though many of them are also genuinely interested in literature. Moreover, the reading public, aside from its lack of taste and anti-intellectual bias, has been conditioned to regard books as luxuries. It goes to a bookstore only when it has $2.50; for the rest it reads magazines of which the cost is paid by advertisers, not by readers. What the publishers need is the market that magazines now dominate, a market which cannot be reached with a price of $2.50.

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This is all by way of leading up to the latest venture by a publisher into mass production and low prices—Pocket Books. Unlike Modern Age Books, which started two years ago and seems to be doing nicely, Pocket Books are exclusively reprints, on the theory, which seems prudent, that the millions who do not now buy books at all can best be conditioned to buying books if they are started off with established titles. This policy eliminates the element of chance in issuing new books which is one of the imponderables in the publishing business. Robert de Graff, editor of Pocket Books, believes that new books must continue to be introduced through the higher-price mechanism. But once the hurdle of mass production and mass consumption has been crossed with reprints, we may reasonably expect lower prices for new books. And eventually, though it may take a long time, if the mechanism of mass production works with books as it has with other commodities—if the potential market for cheap books, which Mr. de Graff puts at 30,000,000, becomes real—the book publishing business can be shifted to a mass-production basis to the profit of authors, booksellers, publishers, and consumers.

Pocket Books are really pocket size, and pocket weight. What seems to be a genuine prejudice against paper covers is obviated by firm "soil- and water-proof Dura-gloss covers," which may, after current American custom, be made of milk or cornstalks for all I know. The first ten titles range from James Hilton's "Lost Horizon" through "The Murder of Roger Ackroyd" by Agatha Christie to Butler's "The Way of all Flesh" and Five Great Tragedies by Shakespeare. Pocket Books is taking the public taste as it finds it. The type is excellent, the paper opaque, the text unabridged. The books are attractive, even gay, and feel like books. They are sold in drug and cigar stores and on newsstands as well as in bookstores. The price is 25 cents. So far they have been put on sale only in and around New York but the first returns have been so promising that national distribution is planned to begin in August. According to the *Publishers' Weekly*, Macy's sold 695 the first day. A small cigar stand in midtown sold 110 copies in the first day and a half. The demand from non-bookstore outlets is almost twice as large as from book and department stores, which means new customers. Well-known authors are already asking that their books be included in forthcoming lists. Ten new titles are to be released each month. They will, like the first group, comprise both classic and popular works. The assumption of Pocket Books that there are 30,000,000 Americans who want to buy good books and can't afford to is at the moment a statement of faith rather than proved fact. I for one subscribe to it.

I HAVE always found what is usually considered light reading pretty heavy going. This may be a defect on the side of purposefulness; but I think it has been proved that there is nothing more enervating than effort without satisfaction, and for me at least the reading of light novels falls into that category. The reading time itself may pass without active discomfort, but the happy ending does not leave me happy; it merely makes me feel as if I had been drinking the froth without the beer. This does not mean that I spend my hours in the hammock reading Marx and Engels or that I do not share the common impulse toward escape. It merely means that the world to which I escape must have a reality of its own sufficiently engaging to blot out my own, for the moment, palling reality. The book which fulfills this qualification may be fantasy or humor. It may, for instance, be "The Sword in the Stone," by T. E. White, which might, I suppose, be put under the heading of light reading but falls as well into a category of more substance. "War and Peace" is easier reading for me than "Anthony Adverse," and I insist that the reasons are not highbrow; I submit that "The Portrait of a Lady," merely as story, is more absorbing than "The Brandons," by Angela Thirkell—one of this summer's lightest novels (Alfred A. Knopf, $2.50). As James said of "Bovary"

> Without proposing Flaubert as the type of newspaper novelist, or as an easy alternative to golf or the bicycle, we should do him less than justice in failing to insist that a masterpiece like "Madame Bovary" may benefit even with the simple-minded. It derives from its firm roundness that sign of all rare works, that there is something in it for everyone. It may be read ever so attentively, ever so freely, without a suspicion of how it is written; it may equally be read under the excitement of these perceptions alone, one of the greatest known to the reader who is fully open to them. Both readers will have been transported, which is all any can ask.

Which is all I ask, and do not get, from such novels as "The Brandons." It is a pleasant book about a delightful English family in a charming English village who are threatened with inheriting a gloomy English estate from an ancient and eccentric (English) aunt. It is full of roses; it is deftly written and talk runs freely. The trouble is that the roses are dried ones; the effect is of a delicate sachet in the bureau drawer. But the scent of dried roses is not enough to dispel the smell of 1939, and so for me "The Brandons" failed in the purpose for which it was obviously intended. It provided no escape. "Black Narcissus," by Rumer Godden (Little Brown, $2.50), has higher pretensions. It tells the story of a group of Anglican nuns who tried to establish a convent on the slopes of the Himalayas facing Kanchenjungha. The mountain and the natives defeat and demoralize them one by one and send them packing before a year is out. The writing is smooth and cool, the locale exotic. I need hardly say that it is reminiscent of "The Bridge of San Luis Rey." It is an attractive book and it is obviously designed as something more than "light reading." It has far more substance than "The Brandons" but for me its irony is too obvious, its pattern too pat; this reader, at least, was not transported, though as usual the dust-cover testifies that other readers have been.

SOME TIME ago, in a discussion of books that might safely be read between eleven and midnight I called for more books about deserts to fill in the gaps between rereadings of Doughty. Galbraith Welch, author of "The Unveiling of Timbuctoo: the Astounding Adventures of René Caillié," one of this year's crop, is, it seems, diligently at work filling my order. She writes:

> I am so pleased by what you say about deserts that I want to write to you. Deserts are caviar to most people. Of course. Otherwise the deserts would be chuck crowded and no one would live in the sown. Same as we would all have flocks of tame sturgeon in our farm yards. I love the Sahara more than any place. We have crossed it from top to bottom and traveled to the Hoggar and the Tuat and lots of other places. I have seen the Bible deserts and the

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Egyptian desert and the desert of the Druses too. You say that this generation reads more good books about deserts. *I* think it needs a system by which everybody is compelled to spend some part of his life living in a desert. Very educational morally. Which Lord knows this generation needs. As far as the books are concerned I am now writing one all about the Sahara. I hope it will be a good one. It is taking a great deal of study, and won't be ready for maybe two years. I hope you will read it when it is printed. And I hope you may like it.

Your remarks about detective stories are very witty. I remember how, when my husband published a few years ago a two-part story in the *Woman's Home Companion* (he is James Francis Dwyer) wherein part one ended with a little girl being swept overboard off a sailing boat, a dear old Irishwoman wrote him and said, "We all feel sure in Baltydaniels that little Isabelle will be saved." I have written one detective story and had the good luck to sell it to a popular magazine. It is laid right in the middle of the Sahara. Don't you think that might make it bearable to you? If so, and if you care to write me, I will see it is sent to you when it comes out in the autumn. It is called "Murder in the Sahara."

Even I would find a detective story laid in the Sahara tempting, and I shall try to be patient until that book "all about the Sahara" provides another midnight oasis.

Wonder what the Inner Life of an Outer Mongolian is like.

MARGARET MARSHALL

Thomas Wolfe, Autobiographer

THE WEB AND THE ROCK. By Thomas Wolfe. Harper and Brothers. $3.

THERE HAS been no American first novel since the war which promised so greatly as "Look Homeward, Angel." To be sure, it was a large, sprawling record cut down from an incredibly longer and more sprawling one. With all the vitality of a born writer behind it, it showed nothing of the discipline of a born artist. It lacked perspective; it lacked proportion; the emotions it struck were too often homesick and adolescent. But nobody reading it could fail to perceive its spendthrift power, or fail to recognize the vigor with which the Gant family was brought to life, or close the book without being aware that no such rhetoric, no such energy and rush of language, had been visited upon any other young man of our time.

"Look Homeward, Angel" was an autobiographical novel, the usual beginning for a young man who wrote hotly and expressively from within. Not at once did the reader grasp that this particular young man must be always an autobiographer, because his equipment—his tortured romantic egoism, his megalomaniac memory, his grandiose assimilation of life in terms of purely personal encounter—outlawed any other approach to literature. But this worship of selfhood was confirmed by Wolfe's second novel, the even more unrestrained "Of Time and the River." Clearly the world about him existed no farther than his eye could see; and it was a world that lacked order, objective truth, social meaning. Only what he could sink his teeth in, or fling his body upon, or whirl about in his memory, was real; and even these were things he must write about with the same vehemence and ardor that he lived them.

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"The Web and the Rock" is again autobiography, full of the same raptures and incontinences, and pondering again those poetic truisms about time and love and death which are as close as Wolfe could come to thinking, and as much philosophy as the egocentric adolescent ever needs. True, Eugene Gant is here called George Webber, and grows up in some other North Carolina community, and salutes the great city with new apostrophes, and embarks with a woman older and mellower than himself on a stormy love affair. Few love affairs in fiction have been more minutely reported. Few, I should think, have been more self-consciously lived through. Scarcely any, while exposing so much, have analyzed so little. The whole business, with Wolfe, becomes a piece of violent self-dramatization.

Wolfe's real weakness was not that he dramatized his life, but that the writer dramatized it even more than the man. The man suffered; the writer merely exulted in the suffering. The man doubted and was afraid; the writer chose to celebrate himself on the grand scale. The result was not entirely hollow or cheaply operatic, but much of it might fairly be called Wagnerian. Wolfe would, to begin with, have acknowledged Wagner's dictum that all art is a way of remembering one's childhood. He had, too, Wagner's grandiosities: used *leitmotivs,* operated in tetralogies, succumbed to that mystical, mindless *Nachtkultur* which pervades "Tristan" and the "Ring." He had the Wagnerian tumidity and opulence, the love of size, the delight in effect; but though in Wagner too there are emptiness and show, Wagner knew how to work in large forms, and what Wagner created in the end—whatever we may think of it intellectually—was indeed a cosmos. Wolfe never created anything, even in disorder. He remembered, he recaptured, he elaborated on things known, and with himself for substructure threw up a great shapeless edifice. Even his prose is not really created; it is only superbly improvised. His best writing is doubtless magnificent, but even his best writing is not solid; and there is hardly one paragraph in all he wrote that is not self-indulgent. His worst prose (and there is a great deal of it) is unspeakable.

The whole body of Wolfe's work, marvelous as fragments of it are, betrays the amateur and the adolescent. One regrets the want of cerebration, the addled values, in much of Hemingway; but as a *writer,* Hemingway is altogether professional, always knows exactly what he is doing. Wolfe knew nothing of the sort, and would never have known. It was not for him to curb his excesses by learning his trade. What he was, what he achieved, resulted from a heady, untamable personality—with the bit in his mouth, he would have turned dumb. Real passion he did not have, for he was too ungovernable to be truly intense. His energies, like his perceptions and his attachments, were adolescent. For home and the home country and the family life he had outgrown, Wolfe was insistently nostalgic. City life and the great world fascinated him to the end, I should guess, because they had fascinated him when he was growing up. "A man spends his youth dreaming out," says a mountain character in a Lola Ridge play, "and the rest of his life dreaming back." Of no one is that truer than of Wolfe.

He never acquired, of course, any values—either intellectual or moral—that were worth consideration. He had enough experience of life, and enough sensibility, to recognize what was narrow, parochial, absurd in the life he quitted; he was so carried away by romanticism that in moments of recoil he could perceive its shams, and look with some suspicion on the individualist codes it produced. But of man's place in the hard, downright living world he knew little, for to a writer so inward-looking the world and himself were one. The great arcana—time and death and fate—fascinated him; but even these, from his incorrigible habit of words, he ended by exploiting and vulgarizing.

Wolfe belonged to the high-pitched, unreal 1920's; their injunction to live fully, to seize all experience, perfectly fitted his need. When he died, young as he was, he had lived too long. For the soberer life that came after the 20's, when the accent fell not on the individual but on society, was something Wolfe could not understand. The fruits that one after another he thirstily sucked in gave him their flavor but no nourishment. One can glibly lament the awful sense of waste about his career; yet one knows, really, that it could not have been otherwise—that his talents were wasteful by nature, that his energies were so wonderful just because they were so unharnessed. One more book of Wolfe's will be published next year. Meanwhile, what remain are the symphonic fragments of language; the tortured soul seen through the angry tumults; the brightly unrolling memory; and the vast wonder of a boy.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

Dorothy Parker's Idle Rich

HERE LIES. By Dorothy Parker. Viking Press. $3.

"I THINK with all my heart," Mrs. Parker said last spring, at one of those dinner-table radio forums on which the public is permitted for half an hour to eavesdrop. What Mrs. Parker thought with all her heart was that workers have the right to picket, a hardly radical view, but one with which General Stotesbury of Philadelphia, with whom she was arguing, heartily disagreed. I am all for heart-thinking in any romantic field, but when it comes to social causes affecting the lives of millions of people, I feel that head-thinking is of more value. Were Mrs. Parker not so talented an artist in the realm of *le coeur humain,* had she not so recently and so frequently stated that she regarded all her pre-social consciousness work as dated as "The Green Hat," I should not in a brief review raise so controversial an issue.

In "Here Lies" there are at least three short stories—A Telephone Call, Here We Are, and Too Bad—that show perfectly and exhaustively certain situations common to the lives of millions of human beings of all classes, races, and nationalities. No one could read any of these stories without being torn by their vividness, their integrity, the clear and vivid perspective they project into a short space. In the expression of these fundamental aspects of the relationships between men and women in contemporary society, Mrs. Parker writes with penetration, finality, and compassion. But when she starts thinking with her heart about men and women in relation to social causes both her art and her logic desert her. Take Arrangement in Black and White and Clothe the Naked, two stories dealing with Negroes and white people.

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Arrangement in Black and White is largely a conversation between a vulgar, stupid woman and the host of a party given for a distinguished Negro singer. Why the host, who by implication is depicted as a sympathetic character, should have invited such an obvious snob—"Oh, I get so furious when people are narrow-minded about colored people. . . . What shall I do when I'm introduced? Ought I to shake hands?"—to do honor to a distinguished artist is difficult to understand. But it is inexcusable to have subjected his guest to an introduction to so cheap and arrogant a person, irrelevant and wasteful to squander such brilliant satire on a fool. The lionizing host is far more worthy of Mrs. Parker's witty contempt.

In Clothe the Naked Mrs. Parker tells the story of a little blind colored boy whose playmates have always been kind and sympathetic until one day, suddenly, they laugh and jeer at him because he appears in some old evening clothes donated by his grandmother's white employer. Whether Mrs. Parker means to imply, as suggested by the title, that the white woman was wicked in giving her husband's discarded evening clothes to the old colored woman or whether she means that poor colored children are cruel and humorless snobs is difficult to determine. The confusion, the sentimentality arise from heart- rather than head-thinking, which defeats Mrs. Parker utterly when she writes about the idle rich.

In Horsie she describes, with all the loving overstatement of a catalogue writer, a rich, spoiled young woman who has recently had a baby. "Her friends gathered, adoring, about the apricot satin chaise-longue where Camilla lay and moved her hands as if they hung heavy from her wrists, they had been wont to gather and adore at the white satin sofa in the drawing-room where Camilla reclined, her hands like heavy lilies in a languid breeze. . . . Motherhood had not brought perfection to Camilla's loveliness. She had had that before."

But for Mrs. Lanier of The Custard Heart, who seems to the detached reader merely an older, childless version of Camilla, Mrs. Parker has only contempt. "She had gowns of velvet like poured country cream and satin with the lacquer of buttercups and chiffon that spiraled about her like golden smoke; . . . in her drawing-room, in the lovely blue of the late day Mrs. Lanier sat upon an opalescent sofa and was wistful." So apparently did Camilla, but she had a baby and Mrs. Lanier only wished for one and failed to notice the pregnancy of her maid. Mrs. Lanier, when she gave money to a beggar, refused the proffered pencils, "leaving him with mean wares intact, not a worker for his livelihood like millions of others, but signal and set apart, rare in the fragrance of charity." How Camilla changes the social system, except through her husband's giving the trained nurse gardenias at her departure, the reader is not informed.

When Mrs. Parker writes about simple, ordinary people in universal situations, her social consciousness comes out clear, powerful, and moving. But when she writes about the idle rich, whether she likes them or hates them, they remain only unimportant, boring people about whom she becomes either sentimental or virulent. Knowing that a writer feels like "a prize sow" when she sees the courage of common soldiers in a war, whether it be in Spain or anywhere

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else, isn't going to kindle into action a reader's abhorrence of war. But the quiet, painstaking analysis of the feeling of ordinary people under intolerable pressure is likely to stimulate even the lazy-minded into a sense of responsibility.

MINA CURTISS

The Common Man in Britain

THE BRITISH COMMON PEOPLE: 1746-1938. By G. D. H. Cole and Raymond Postgate. Alfred A. Knopf. $4.

HERE is a book which deserves a place on the shelves not far from the works of the Webbs and the Hammonds. Unlike those great partnerships, the authors have not opened up unexplored territory, but they have made a more thorough survey of the whole history of the British working classes than anyone else has hitherto attempted. Moreover, they have set their narrative squarely in its economic setting. Thus at each stage in the development of the labor movement we are given a picture of the contemporary state of industry and, more particularly, of just what that meant in terms of living conditions for the masses.

The period covered by the book is a scant two hundred years—a tiny fraction of historic time but how large a span of social time. It opens with an account of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, the last unsuccessful kick of feudalism; it ends with the present crisis of British imperialism—a crisis almost as paralyzing to the British labor movement as it is to the British capitalist class.

In those distant days of the mid-eighteenth century the first signs of the industrial revolution were barely discernible in a predominantly agricultural landscape. Labor organization was equally rudimentary, existing only in the form of a few scattered trade clubs and friendly societies which contrived to dodge the rigorous laws against "combinations." Nor was there much room for growth in this direction until the development of power machinery and the factory system widened the gulf between the skilled artisan and his employer. Thus when the discontents of the common people first became articulate it was to the political field that they turned. That was then a monopoly of the landed interests, and save in a few ancient cities where happily the survival of traditional privileges resulted in a fairly wide franchise, even the middle classes had no vote. In the early struggles for political reform, such as that which centered around John Wilkes, the middle and working classes joined hands. It was often an uneasy alliance, but it continued until the passage of the great Reform Act in 1832. Then the workers, who had done so much to secure this triumph, found that they were still excluded from political rights while their bourgeois allies had captured the seats of power. Disgusted at the manner in which they had been tricked, the workers henceforth looked only to their own strength. As Messrs. Cole and Postgate point out, "The theory of the class struggle now for the first time appeared overtly in British history as a dominant belief."

The energies of the British working classes have always run in a number of distinct, though usually connected, channels—industrial, political, educational. When in one of these a serious obstacle was encountered, the flow has generally been diverted into another. Thus after 1832 there was a rapid and excited growth in trade unionism which culminated in an attempt to organize a "Grand National Consolidated Trades Union." This caused great alarm for a time among employers, but there was more enthusiasm than efficiency behind it, and after a series of disastrous strikes it quickly collapsed. Thereupon the workers began again to look for a political remedy for their grievances, and the Chartist movement was born.

American readers of this book will find it interesting to compare the development of the British Labor Party with that of our own. Nowadays the British Labor Party is almost ultra-respectable, and industrial disputes in England are normally conducted by both sides with a regard for the rules almost worthy of a cricket match. But it was not always so. In this book there are plenty of tales of violence, espionage, agents provocateurs, the ruthless use of the machinery of government to crush the aspirations of the workers. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century class warfare was no figure of speech, and even in recent years there have been occasional incidents that have ruffled the suavity of the ruling class and suggested the bitterness with which it could fight to retain its privileges. In view of the current row between the A. F. of L. and the C. I. O. it is interesting to have an account of the struggle between the British craft unions and the industrial unions. The economic setting was not dissimilar. The craft unions rose to power during the long period of prosperity which set in around 1850, and after a hard fight with the employers to establish their position settled down to comfortable conservatism. The industrial unions were a creation of the slump which began in the seventies. The conflict between them was intense for a few years, but the trade-union movement was never split wide open. American union leaders might well study Messrs. Cole and Postgate's account of this period and ask themselves how and why this divergence of interests between two sections of the working class was not permitted to override the interests of the movement as a whole.

KEITH HUTCHISON

California Grotesque

THE DAY OF THE LOCUST. By Nathanael West. Random House. $2.

HOLLYWOOD-BAITING is a branch of literature that began brilliantly with "Once in a Lifetime" and is still drawing noteworthy contributions, some good-humored and some bitter. But here is a book that attempts to do a great deal more than just pillory the foibles and flimflammery of the movie industry. While its setting is Hollywood, and the miasma of the studio naturally permeates the lives of all the people concerned, Mr. West has sketched an acidulous melange of Southern California grotesques, including not only the usual figures of the disillusioned artist and the self-centered ham actress and the mother of the would-be child star, but some samples of the queer folk you don't read so much about: the Middle Westerners who have saved up a few thousand dollars and moved to California to end their days basking in its vaunted sun. These people, mostly middle-aged, often semi-invalid, invariably bored with their self-chosen life of idleness, inhabit an appalling

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spiritual wasteland in which the only plants that take firm root are the "crank" cults you will find advertised flamboyantly in cheap psychology magazines under names like "The Search for Truth," "The Quest for Life," "Power Through Mental Force," and, on a slightly different plane, the "Ham and Eggs" Utopias.

Around the central character of Tod Hackett, a young painter attached to one of the big studios, Mr. West has grouped such a galaxy of spongers, misfits, and eccentrics as will give a sensitive reader the crawling horrors. Even Tod himself, while generous and likable, suffers from lack of will-power; though he recognizes the cheapness and artificiality of blond Faye Greener, he has not the strength either to put her out of his mind or to demand from her the favors she withholds only from those who are considerate of her. The story ends on a particularly nightmarish note, when Tod, trying to help a poor lumbering dolt who has also been blighted by Faye's fascination, is injured by the star-worshipping, irresponsible mob outside a world première.

There is abundant material here for scathing satire or careful social study, and the principal objection to "The Day of the Locust" is apt to be that it merely scratches the surface. To make the picture less sketchy, less like the strongly highlighted scenes of a bad dream, it needs more thorough characterization, more documentation—most of all, perhaps, a few ordinary, everyday people (of whom there must be a few even in Hollywood), to lend perspective. Perhaps this very sketchiness was part of the author's plan, but by presenting only a two-dimensional picture it detracts from the impressiveness of what could well be a very striking arraignment of America's most unbelievable menagerie.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

Ex-Convict Triumphs

TRAITOR'S WAY. By Bruce Hamilton. Bobbs-Merrill. $2.

"HUSH, HERE comes the Fascist" is the theme song of up-to-date thriller fiction, and Mr. Hamilton has certainly provided us with an excellent story about an escaped convict who by hide-and-then-run methods saves himself, England, and democracy, and prevents the outbreak of a world war. And no hero has ever done fairer than that!

It is a first-person narrative. Noel Mason, a quiet young man of sedentary habits, is sentenced to serve a term at Dartmoor convict prison because he gets mixed up with the Opposition to a meeting of the English fascists addressed by their leader, Greatorex. He strikes a policeman who has brutally assaulted his friend, and by a couple of mischances is found to be in possession of seditious literature. Opportunity arises for an escape from the prison from which no convict has ever successfully escaped, and at the next moment throws into his keeping secret papers which reveal the existence of a gigantic plot to sell the country to the Nazis, incriminating the Prime Minister himself. From this point, it is, of course, not only the police but the Nazis who are on his track; and it is touch and go all the time as he plays hide-and-seek around the rural roads and towns of Devonshire. An endearing trait about Mr. Mason is that he is not too bright and good for human nature's daily food; he

DURING the past two months you have probably read and heard a great deal about **PURSLANE,** by Bernice Kelly Harris, and **THESE ARE OUR LIVES,** compiled by the Federal Writers' Project. But we should like also to call your attention to some other recent books from Chapel Hill—

SEVEN LEAN YEARS, *by T. J. Woofter, Jr. and Ellen Winston.* "... a book that should be read by every person in the United States who is interested in American agriculture and is concerned about the future."—M. L. Wilson, Under Secretary, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture. Illustrated. $1.50

TOBE, *by Stella Gentry Sharpe;* with illustrations by Charles Farrell. A little colored boy who lives on a Southern farm tells what he and his brothers do the year round. Of the illustrations, Guy R. Lyle in *Wilson Bulletin* says, "They are superb." 72 full-page illustrations. $1.00

TO MAKE A POET BLACK, *by J. Saunders Redding.* "Sympathetic understanding combined with intellectual honesty; pithy, original comments upon particular writers and their writings."—*American Sociological Review.* $1.50

THE BIOGRAPHY OF A RIVER TOWN: MEMPHIS, *by Gerald M. Capers, Jr.* From the time of the Chickasaw Bluffs to 1900, the history of Memphis has been a turbulent one—a strange mixture of South and West. And Mr. Capers tells this history from the point of view that "an adequate biography of any of our key cities ... would be more significant to the national epic than the biography of even so prominent a figure as Theodore Roosevelt." Illustrated. $3.50

CALDWELL AND COMPANY, *by John Berry McFerrin.* With an objectivity not possible only a few years ago when the "Morgan of the South" crashed, Mr. McFerrin here discusses from actual records of cases, from newspapers of the period, and from personal interviews the "madhouse banking of the 1920's." $3.50

BLACK WORKERS AND THE NEW UNIONS, *by Horace R. Cayton and George S. Mitchell.* $4.00

TREES OF THE SOUTH, *by Charlotte Hilton Green;* with about 450 illustrations. $2.50

THE PARTY OF HUMANITY, *by Edwin Mallard Everett.* $3.50

CHILD LABOR LEGISLATION IN THE SOUTHERN TEXTILE STATES, *by Elizabeth H. Davidson.* $4.00

A HISTORY OF BRAZIL, *by Joao Pandia Calogeras;* translated and edited by Percy Alvin Martin. The third volume in The Inter-American Historical Series. $5.00

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finally walks into a very neat trap made for him by the Nazis; and ends up by bringing the papers not, as he imagines, to the most important Opposition leader, but to Greatorex himself. Obviously this makes the last few pages good reading: he stands a certain amount of torture but when it is proposed to lay a red-hot poker across his eyeballs, he cries "Hold! enough!" or words to that effect, and it is a good thing for the world that a rescue occurs in the nick of time. No wonder Mr. Mason feels proud and sleeps sweetly when later on the Home Secretary tells him: "Peace is safe, at least for the time being, and maybe for a generation; for there are signs that fascism here may not be able to survive this blow." That is what may be called a really happy ending! NORAH HOULT

Shorter Notices

THESE ARE OUR LIVES. By members of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. The University of North Carolina Press. $2.

This is a collection of thirty-five short, informal autobiographical sketches of people in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, collected by workers on the WPA Writers' Project, and reported as nearly as possible in the words of the people themselves. The purpose of the project was "to get life histories which are readable and faithful representations of living persons, and which, taken together, will give a fair picture of the structure and working of society." The subjects include farm owners, tenant farmers, landlords, merchants, mill and factory workers, specialists from bootblack to dentist, and folk on relief. They are white and black, old and young, men and women—a few of them prosperous but most of them poor, hard-working, living on the ragged edge, driven on by habit and the will to live. No melodrama here, and no appeal for a specific solution to "the nation's number one economic problem"—some of the people in the book even resent being called a problem—but simply a factual cross-section, revealed through individuals, of the Southern scene as of 1938. The University of North Carolina Press has issued it in an exceptionally attractive format.

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SELECTED POEMS. By Sister M. Madeleva. The Macmillan Company. $1.60.

Sister Madeleva has been publishing skillful and pleasant lyrics for a number of years. Her themes are often but not always religious. She writes simply and effectively. Nothing in her form or her ideas is startlingly individual, but her taste is excellent, her poetry is never overwritten. This volume establishes her as one of our most graceful minor figures.

THE ANTIGONE OF SOPHOCLES: AN ENGLISH VERSION. By Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald. Harcourt, Brace. $1.50.

In publishing three years ago their version of the "Alcestis" of Euripides, Mr. Fitts and Mr. Fitzgerald showed the way for our poets to render Greek drama in terms of contemporary poetic sensibility and with an eye to contemporary stagecraft. They have now succeeded with the more exacting "Antigone." The dramatic passages, such as the heroine's great scenes and the Tiresias episode, are done with eloquence and high seriousness; the choruses, including the Ode to Man and the Paean, are renewed as things of beauty:

> Numberless are the world's wonders, but none
> More wonderful than man; the storm-grey sea
> Yields to his prows, the huge crests bear him high;
> Earth, holy and inexhaustible, is graven
> With shining furrows where his plows have gone
> Year after year, the timeless labor of stallions.

The translators have worked freely, and their freedom has wisely exercised itself in pruning Sophocles's lush figures, which seem insufferably rhetorical when taken over literally into a modern language that lacks the syntactical compression of the Greek. In coming to this version from the original, one misses most, if inevitably, the strongly marked rhythms of the latter, especially in those passages that were written to be danced. Fitts and Fitzgerald usually write cadenced verse or loose iambics, with a closer approach to strict metrical or accentual forms in the choruses. When they tackle other Greek plays, it is to be hoped that they will strive for stronger and more regular rhythmic structures. Unless they did so, one fears, their treatment of the "Bacchae" or the "Eumenides" would be merely tantalizing.

Dance Note

The serious art of the modern dance has never, even in its more relaxed moments, really been fun. It has always tended to be top-heavy with Meaning. Tac, in its initial dance program, took the lid off the subject, used the gentle yeast of humor as leavening, and got more than one rise out of the audience. It proved that the modern dance can be a lively art, and that the formal gesture of rise and revolt, which achieved its classic ridicule in the inimitable hands, feet, and mouth of Fannie Brice, isn't necessary to bring dance to the masses. Agnes de Mille and Sybil Shearer led the laughter in a devastating take-off of the pain-loving school of the modern dance. Ballet took a sock, too, in the side-splitting rehearsal of Symphonic Ballet. "The Curse of the Silk Chemise" and "Picket-line Priscilla" were as close as the show got to social comment—though I had understood that that would be the tone of the evening. And the real virtues of these numbers were the personal virtues of Dorothy Bird.

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Lotte Goslar's tragi-comic "Little Heap of Misery" was clowning of the highest order where pain and laughter are etched into identical grooves. Meta Krahn and Otto Ulbricht contributed two superlative dances in a style that combines preposterous acrobatic postures with impassive faces. Jack Cole's two slick numbers belong more to the revue than to the concert stage, and Esther Junger's dances had the kind of pretentious satire which was here yesterday and should be gone tomorrow. But with the exception of these two, the work presented was amazingly good. VIRGINIA MISHNUN

RECORDS

ERNEST BLOCH is not without honor in the musical world, and his music is not unperformed; but he receives neither the honor nor the performances that are his due; for the range, depth, power, and individuality of his emotion, and the richness and individuality of the idiom and forms in which the emotion achieves musical expression, make him the outstanding musical artist of our period. What the public knows best is the easily played Concerto Grosso, a work of minor significance in his total output; and once in a great while it may hear "Schelomo," Koussevitzky's performance last season being the first I had heard in New York in at least ten years. The superb "Voice in the Wilderness" has not been repeated in New York since Rodzinski introduced it with the Philharmonic two years ago, though no work of Bax or Vaughan Williams has been too dull, no early symphony of Schubert too inconsequential for Barbirolli to set before the Philharmonic's subscribers. And the Metropolitan has considered Hageman's "Caponsacchi" and Damrosch's "The Man Without a Country" worthy of production but not Bloch's "Macbeth," despite the impressive reports of its success in Italy a year ago.

On records too there was the Concerto Grosso long before there were major works like the Piano Quintet five years ago and the Violin Sonata last year. And now Victor issues a new set (three records, $5) of the Concerto Grosso in an excellent performance by the Curtis Chamber Music Ensemble under Louis Bailly. With this set Victor claims to demonstrate its "healthy interest in music by modern composers"; but it would demonstrate this more convincingly if it had Bailly record the Viola Suite which he played with the National Symphony in 1920, or if it secured the New York Philharmonic for Bloch himself to record "Voice in the Wilderness."

Mozart's fine Sonata K. 332, available until now in a performance by Ernst Victor Wolff that feminizes and sentimentalizes the music, is offered now by Victor in a performance by Iturbi (two records, $4.50) that is even worse—to the point where the last movement sounds as coy as though it were all about the three itty-bitty fishies. On the other hand, those for whom Brahms's 'Cello Sonata Opus 39 is a more convincing work than it is for me will find it excellently played by Piatigorsky and Artur Rubinstein (three records, $6.50).

Schubert's youthful Symphony No. 4 ("Tragic"), despite its pretentious title, or possibly because of it, is even less impressive than the No. 5 recently done by Beecham; and

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"A really important book full of fascinating stories." — *Saturday Review of Literature*

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Barbirolli's performance with the New York Philharmonic (four records, $8) hasn't the qualities that made Beecham's enjoyable for itself. As for the duets of Schumann in the little two-record set ($3.50), they are, with one exception, mellifluously sentimental, and the worse in this respect for their orchestrated accompaniments. The exception is the vivacious "Unterm Fenster," which provides the one occasion for Lehmann and Melchior to do the imaginative singing they are capable of.

That leaves a single record ($2) with Stokowski's tabloid versions of Johann Strauss's "Blue Danube" and "Tales from the Vienna Woods," played with brilliance and verve; and another single (75 cents) with Paul Robeson's fine singing of "Lay Down Late" and Robeson's and Lawrence Brown's singing of "Goin' to Ride Up in de Chariot" and "Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit."

The idea and the words of "Strange Fruit," the song about lynching that Billie Holiday has been singing, are excellent; the music sounds quite poor to me. But on the reverse side of the Commodore record is "Fine and Mellow," a superb blues as Billie sings it with Frankie Newton playing along on trumpet. If we take this as defining authentic blues style then Mildred Bailey's singing of "St. Louis Blues" (Vocalion), though beautifully phrased, falls considerably short of authenticity. For one thing, the mood is not right because the pace is too swift. "You Don't Know My Mind Blues" and "Down Hearted Blues" are better because they are slower; but better still is the "Down Hearted Blues" that Mildred recorded for English Parlophone a few years ago; and the playing of Teddy Wilson, Bunny Berrigan, and Johnny Hodges in this older version is also superior to the work—good as this is—of the groups of players on the new Vocalion records. I would say that it is Billie Holiday who should sing blues, and Mildred Bailey who should sing songs like "And the Angels Sing" (Vocalion).

There is fine work on xylophone by Red Norvo in his "Rehearsin' for a Nervous Breakdown" (Vocalion); Jack Teagarden's trombone solo in his new de luxe band's "Sheik of Araby" (Brunswick) is enjoyable, though not up to the achievements of his less luxurious days; the Basie Orchestra's "If I Didn't Care" (Vocalion) would be good if the solo players were not constantly being interrupted by the band before they can develop an idea; and the rest I will have to postpone.

B. H. HAGGIN

FILMS

IN "LENIN in 1918" (Amkino) the following happens: Gorky pleads against the abuse of revolutionary power and Lenin demonstrates to him in a discussion à la Socrates with a simple worker that leniency with the plotting class enemy would be the doom of the revolution. The plotters approach the commander of the Kremlin Guards who pretends to join them. Dershinsky, the head of the Cheka, directs him to go to the meeting of the conspirators and has the place surrounded. There the Kremlin commander falls out of character when he hears that Lenin is to be murdered the same evening, and the plotters recognize him as a spy. He has a narrow escape, jumping through a third-story window, and informs the Cheka commander of the impending danger. The Chekist rushes away to warn Lenin. After that the Kremlin commander, who has been disabled by his jump, reveals to another Chekist who takes charge of him that "Trotsky, Kamenev, and Bukharin are traitors." For this important disclosure he is shot on the spot not because he has told an unbelievable lie, but because his subordinate is also a secret plotter, who does not want the truth revealed. Then we see Lenin leave the Kremlin to make a speech in a factory meeting. Bukharin stops him before he enters his car and tells him that he has given up all oppositionist activities. Lenin doubts his sincerity but is nevertheless relieved. Then Bukharin, in the mask and gesture of Judas, asks him where he is going. To some factory, is the answer. Not to the riding academy? No, the place for the speech has been changed. Lenin leaves and Bukharin waits with a grin for the Cheka commander to come. When he arrives breathless, Bukharin misleads him, telling him that Lenin has gone to the riding academy. Thus the occasion is manufactured for Fanny Kaplan to take a shot at Lenin. Had Bukharin told the truth, Lenin would have been warned in time. There follow long sequences of Lenin on his sick-bed. In his fever his thoughts turn to—whom? To the commander of the Red Army fighting on a dozen fronts? To his nearest collaborators? No! To an obscure and disobedient commissar with the Red Army near Tsaritsin. His name is Stalin. If only Stalin were near him, if only Stalin would come in time! We see Stalin in his train, busy organizing a victory, which is promptly achieved the next morning. The news brings Lenin back to life. And when Stalin arrives and tells Lenin what to do the revolution marches on. Nevertheless it takes Stalin exactly twenty years to discover the treachery of every old Bolshevik except himself and to have this film produced.

This thorough falsification of history is told with skill, acted excellently, and directed cleverly in documentary fashion. People who did not believe their ears at the time of the Moscow trials now may believe their eyes. People who do not know history may even regard this picture as "an honest and convincing re-creation of the past." This sentence, however, was written by Howard Barnes of the New York *Herald Tribune,* who is quoted here only as one example of the reviewers who covered themselves with shame in discussing as crude and unscrupulous a piece of propaganda as any dictator ever presented as "history."

"On Borrowed Time" (M-G-M) is a perfectly photographed reproduction of the successful stage play of the same name—which means it is a disappointment. The play itself merely toyed with a great theme: What would happen if Death were caught and nobody ever died? The play left the answer within the artificial limits of a little private story of which the writing lacked the power to present the important through the small. The film magnifies this shortcoming. What was unbelievable in the play—that no uproar occurs when people realize that no one can die—is absurd in the film. A great occasion for an exceptional movie has been missed. However, the picture fails only in what it does not do. Otherwise it is superb. Lionel Barrymore gives a more convincing performance than he has done in a long time, and a perfect cast and a beautiful production will yield you a very pleasant evening.

FRANZ HOELLERING

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Letters to the Editor

London Life

Dear Sirs: London is an exciting place just now. While it would be humiliating to admit that we mostly live between Hitler's speeches, it is true that that supreme demagogue takes up a predominating place in our minds. Whereas news from Germany used to be at a discount, whereas German books were very little read here, both are now in the front rank. The libraries teem with German translations. The radio has brought Germany into every household.

In the meantime preparations are going on for the worst. Some of us, but by no means all, have got in the extra supply of provisions counseled by the authorities. To buy them now is praiseworthy; to buy them afterward would be hoarding. We rather half-heartedly buy a few tins of bully beef, biscuits, sardines, canned fruit, condensed milk, and so on. It all seems rather silly and unreal. We put them in the wardrobe or under the stairs, for there isn't really much room for extra things.

Some of us buy up extra clothes. If war comes, clothes will be harder to come by than last time, when things became so much more valuable than money. But the emptiness of the shops testifies that not many people are doing this. Precautions—you can't really take any precautions in a private house. A few people have stored a rope with which to get out of a burning house. We are under no illusions regarding high-powered bombs, the results of which we see every day at the cinema. And this is the main difference between this war and the last. Everybody is in the front line instead of bravely and nobly sending other people there.

There are so many services that it is difficult to choose between air-raid precautions, evacuation, canteen work, land work, nursing, first aid, lorry driving, air service. Most of us are doing one or another of them. None of us want to move until we see what is going to happen. In domestic life decisions are all the time being deferred.

People hesitate about traveling and then go. Cruises have diminished, but many have gone. Picture postcards still come from Italy, where British travelers continue to be astounded at the courtesy of the Italians toward us and their alleged wish to be friends.

It is perhaps a peculiarity of the British mind to dwell upon the prowess of the other nation, while forgetting to mention our own. Now and again we are shown a tank or an anti-air gun. Recruiting offices of every kind have become so familiar as almost to be invisible. The Budget of course hinted that money was being spent. But for all we see, for all the reassurance we receive, we might all be going to lie down in the street for Hitler's airmen to bomb us more conveniently. Nobody believes this exactly, but there is not much official reassurance to the contrary.

Conscription in even the present limited form feels real. The charwoman's son is twenty. So is the plumber's brother; so is a nephew, or will be in a few days. Twenty has suddenly become a sinister age, while on the Continent it is merely an age of military training.

MURIEL HARRIS

London, England, May

Manifesto and Appeal

Dear Sirs: Not in this country alone but everywhere culture is threatened by advancing reaction. In forcing the recrudescence of social forms which had seemed obsolete, German and Italian fascism have at the same time compelled the revival of obsolete modes in art and science. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, where nationalism and personal dictatorship are replacing the revolutionary ideals of freedom and democracy, culture suffers regimentation and debasement no less severe.

Nor are signs lacking of deepening social reaction in the United States. Increasingly, experimentation is discouraged in the creative arts; a premium is put upon the conventional and the academic. The social sciences are witnessing the revival of various forms of obscurantism, the rise of an intolerant orthodoxy. Educators are being intimidated through loyalty oaths. Government censorship cripples WPA theater, art, and literary projects. Terrorism is exercised by the Catholic church over such cultural enterprises as the movies. Covert sabotage hinders the publication of work by independent and revolutionary writers. And in heresy-hunting bodies like the Dies committee, many of these tendencies find official and concentrated expression.

Such conditions are a challenge to independent intellectuals. Yet no existing cultural organization is ready fully to meet the challenge. If in the totalitarian states intellectual life is an affair for the police, in America it is preparing, under pressure of anti-fascist hysteria, for voluntary abdication. Cultural circles, formerly progressive, are now capitulating to the spirit of fascism while ostensibly combating its letter. They fight one falsehood with another. To the deification of Hitler and Mussolini they counterpose the deification of Stalin, the unqualified support of Roosevelt. The mysticism of "Aryan" supremacy they match with a national-democratic myth conjured out of America's historic infancy. To the war drive of the fascist powers they reply with a war drive of their own.

In consequence the intellectual gains of recent decades are being rapidly wiped out. The last war set moving in this country a profound current of skepticism in respect to bourgeois values in art and life. Responsible for the finest cultural achievements of the post-war period, this tendency culminated after 1929 in the radicalization of a significant part of the intelligentsia. But now, in the name of a spurious "anti-fascist" unity, numerous intellectuals are deserting their hard-won critical independence. They are giving up their opposition to capitalist exploitation and oppression, to imperialist domination of colonial lands. They no longer protest repression and frame-up in this country, in the Soviet Union, and in other "democracies." They have forsaken the struggle for the right of asylum. In the name of a "democratic front" against tyranny abroad they put up with increasing tyranny at home. In short, they have surrendered the right—and duty—to protest all injustice, to investigate all formulae, to challenge all dogmas, to think through all probems. And inspired by Stalinist and social-reformist propaganda they advocate a new war for "democracy." Yet this war must give birth to military dictatorship and to forms of intellectual repression far more violent than those evoked by the last war.

Among advanced intellectual circles in the United States the most active forces of reaction today are the so-called cultural organizations under control of

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the Communist Party. Pretending to represent progressive opinion, these bodies are in effect but apologists for the Kremlin dictatorship. They outlaw all dissenting opinion from the Left. They poison the intellectual atmosphere with slander. And they have succeeded in imposing their views and methods on groups formerly independent of the Communist Party.

Against these forces we, the undersigned, believe that artists and writers must unite to defend their independence as craftsmen, indeed, their very right to work. It goes without saying that we do not subscribe to that currently fashionable catchword: "Neither communism nor fascism." On the contrary, we recognize that the liberation of culture is inseparable from the liberation of the working classes and of all humanity. Shall we abandon the ideals of revolutionary socialism because one political group, while clinging to its name, has so miserably betrayed its principles? Shall we revert to a program of middle-class democracy because the Kremlin government, in obedience to its own interests—which are no longer the interests of the Russian people or of the masses anywhere—directs us to do so? On the contrary, we reject all such commands. Democracy under industrial-capitalism can offer no permanent haven to the intellectual worker and artist. In its instability, it becomes the breeding ground of dictatorship, and the liberties it grants us today it will violently revoke tomorrow. The idea of democracy must come to flower in a socialist democracy. In the revolutionary reconstruction of society lies the hope of the world, the promise of a free humanity, a new art, an unrestricted science.

The defense of intellectual freedom requires, moreover, that we reject all theories and practices which tend to make culture the creature of politics, even revolutionary politics. We demand complete freedom for art and science, no dictation by party or government. Culture not only does not seek orders but by its very nature cannot tolerate them. Truly intellectual creation is incompatible with the spirit of conformity; and if art and science are to be true to the revolution, they must first be true to themselves.

We are not alone in these convictions. Our principles are in general agreement with those contained in a recent manifesto of André Breton, the French poet, and Diego Rivera, the Mexican painter. Movements inspired by their manifesto have already appeared in France, England, and elsewhere.

We appeal, therefore, to all writers and artists in the United States who are in substantial accord with our views to unite with us in forming a revolutionary league of writers and artists. The function of this organization will be to give publicity to our aims, to provide a forum for cultural discussion, and to campaign against all reactionary tendencies in intellectual life wherever they arise. (Please address all communications to Dwight Macdonald, Acting Secretary, 539 East Eighty-eighth Street, New York City.)

The League for Cultural Freedom and Socialism

JAMES BURNHAM, V. F. CALVERTON, ELEANOR CLARK, DAVID C. DEJONG, F. W. DUPEE, JAMES T. FARRELL, CLEMENT GREENBERG, WILLIAM GRUEN, MELVIN J. LASKY, JAMES LAUGHLIN IV, DWIGHT MACDONALD, CHARLES MALAMUTH, SHERRY MANGAN, CLARK MILLS, GEORGE L. K. MORRIS, GEORGE NOVACK, LYMAN PAINE, KENNETH PATCHEN, WILLIAM PHILLIPS, FAIRFIELD PORTER, PHILIP RAHV, JAMES RORTY, HAROLD ROSENBERG, PAUL ROSENFELD, MEYER SCHAPIRO, DELMORE SCHWARTZ, WINFIELD T. SCOTT, JOHN WHEELWRIGHT, BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

New York, June 15

Information, Please

Dear Sirs: In working (for a master's thesis at Cornell) on the life of Reuben E. Fenton—whose public career as governor and senator was the subject of frequent comment in *The Nation*, 1865-1875—I have come upon a reference to a special campaign supplement of the New York *Times* described in the regular edition of the same day, September 26, 1872, which purports to reprint the police-court record of a proceeding against Fenton. No original court record can be found.

I am very eager to see a photostat of this article. I have appealed to eighteen libraries having files of the *Times*, including the *Times's* own library, but they all lack this special supplement. I should welcome information from anyone knowing of a copy of this paper. My address is 526 Windsor Street, Jamestown.

HELEN G. MC MAHON

Jamestown, N. J., July 7

Dear Sirs: I am completing a biography of the artist Louis M. Eilshemius scheduled for fall publication, and would like to hear from those who have had personal associations or correspondence with him, especially in his younger or middle years. My address is 439 West 123d Street, New York City.

WILLIAM SCHADS

New York, July 6

CONTRIBUTORS

CRANE BRINTON is the author of "The Anatomy of Revolution."

NATHANIEL PEFFER, the author of "Must We Fight in Asia?", lectures at Columbia University on international affairs.

CHARLES CURTIS MUNZ, author of "Land Without Moses," is currently writing books on the cotton industry and on the Mexicans in the United States.

McALISTER COLEMAN is head of the information bureau of the Utility Users' Protection League of New Jersey.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER is dramatic editor of *Time*.

MINA CURTISS was formerly a member of the English Department of Smith College.

LOUIS B. SALOMON is a member of the English Department of Brooklyn College.

NORAH HOULT is a British novelist, author of "Coming from the Fair" and other books.

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